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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[BROTHER AND SISTER.]

SHE SHINES ME DOWN.

(BY ANNIE THOMAS.)

CHAPTER III.

SPIDER AND FLY.

But only nerve and heart can win,
And that by stern insistence,
For coy Success ne'er yields to stress
Of wooing at a distance.

THAT night, in the seclusion of the conjugal chamber, Mrs. Dumorest makes confession.

"Clement, I suppose you understand that I'm not capricious and fanciful merely, don't you? My only motive in finding Torquay intolerable is to get Arch away. That creature who planted herself opposite to us at dinner, and piqued him by never looking at him once, is just the sort of woman to get him into her toils."

"And why not her toils as well as another's?" Dumorest answers, lazily.

He is very fond of his brother-in-law, but rather weary of the constantly recurring anxiety which the young man's possible conjugal course in life creates in his sister's mind.

"In the first place we know nothing about her, Clem, in the second place, if I knew everything about her, and it was all good, I should hate Arch to marry a widow, and, in the third place, I don't like her; I never shall like her, and I'll do my best to prevent Arch's liking her. Now

I have been candid as to my wishes and intentions, will you help me, or will you not?"

Her husband laughs.

"You have been the cause of bringing about the very evil you dread," he says, blandly. "If you hadn't given way to a feeling of feminine aversion to the sight of the objectionable lady's dog, she wouldn't have had a chance of breaking through the magic circle your sisterly affection would draw around him; as it is politeness will compel you to receive the apologies she's coming to make to you to-morrow."

"Did you go down into the garden and talk to her, Clement?"

"I can hardly say we 'talked' to her."

"We! was Arch with you?"

"He was."

"And knowing what I feared you let her get hold of him?"

"I thought it was the dog you feared, not the dog's mistress."

"Oh, Clement, what frivolity, and what (excuse me) pig-headedness on your part; tell me exactly what passed."

Mr. Dumorest sleepily and sketchily recounts as much as he remembers of the interview to the partner of his bosom.

"Ah, well, if that's all there's not much harm done. I'm not going to see her. I disbelieve in making promiscuous acquaintances, and will be off to Plymouth to-morrow. Just imagine what that woman would be as the mistress of Friars Court! You're blind to the interests of your children to have allowed Arch to hold any communication with her; a woman who is capable of philandering with a couple of men at first sight in an hotel garden at night is capable of

following up a parti like Arch and forcing him to marry her."

The sort of woman, women hate
Men fatally adore,

Dumorest quotes, dreamily.

"I want to go to Plymouth, Arch," Mrs. Dumorest says to her brother directly they meet in the morning. "I have had a letter from a friend who is staying there, and I want to see her; let it be Plymouth."

Mrs. Dumorest throws over mere finesse at this juncture, and tells "a falsehood which is half a truth," in order to carry her point. It is true that she has had a letter from a friend who writes from Plymouth, but it is untrue that this friend's presence would draw her to Plymouth by the force of its own attraction, and the implied expectation of finding the friend there is also false, as the young lady has written to say that she is leaving for the North of Devon the same morning on which she writes to Mrs. Dumorest. However, the end to be attained is, in Mrs. Dumorest's eyes, so noble, that it would justify even more ignoble means than she employs.

To keep Arch unmarried as long as possible for the good of his nephew and niece is the obvious duty of their mother. It is equally her obvious duty to take care that should he ever assert his manly right to have a wife of his own, that the chosen one shall be as ductile a sister as he has hitherto proved himself a brother.

"I'm not selfish in this," Mrs. Dumorest says to herself, assailing her own conscience, "only no one knows better than I do how exceedingly

unpleasant it would be for Arch if his wife was at variance with me."

She reminds herself of this aphorism now as she proposes Plymouth as their port, and gives as a reason for going there the engaging presence of a person whom she knows has already quitted it precincts.

"I can't say I care much for the place myself, but as you want to meet your friend we'll go, wind willing, this afternoon," Arch says, not a bit too enthusiastically. And Mr. Dumorest asks, with callous disregard for the delicacy of the web his wife is weaving:

"By the way, Flo, who is your friend? I seldom see any of your lady satellites, but if you want them for any purpose, then, lo! there's one sure to be ready to your hand at a moment's notice. Who is this one?"

"It's Gwendoline," Mrs. Dumorest answers, curtly.

"My pretty pupil of the spring? What's she doing down at Plymouth?"

"Trying her hand at landscape," Mrs. Dumorest answers, impatiently; "how many questions you ask, Clement."

"She had better stick to portraits," Dumorest goes on, disregarding his wife's rebuke. "She has a career before her as a portrait painter if she only sticks to work, and works harder after each disappointment."

"Who is she?" Arch asks, dragging his attention back to current conversation with an effort.

He has been employing the few moments which the husband and wife have been giving to sweet converse, to the development of some plan by which he can gain one more sight—of one more word with Mrs. Cardigan. Now he has made up his mind. He will not offer the faintest opposition to his sister's wishes. The "Ghost," with all hands on board, shall sail for Plymouth without delay.

It is only right that Florence should go where she likes. But when once they are riding safely at anchor off the Admiral's Head, Arch feels that the time will have come for him to pay something like decent attention to his own inclinations.

"We'll get away from here by two o'clock," he says to his sister, "that will suit you, won't it? There's not much of a wind; we may be knocking about all night, but you won't mind that, will you?"

"No!" Mrs. Dumorest feels so supremely satisfied with the results of her own diplomacy that she will not mind anything.

"And it's only half-past ten now; what shall we do with ourselves till it's time to start?" Archibald Saltoun asks, with restrained eagerness.

He fondly hopes that his sister will want to write letters or superintend her packing, and that Clement will feel inclined to sketch. For from the window he sees Mrs. Cardigan and Vengeance taking their serpentine way along the winding paths that lead to the water, and after the rencounter of last night, if he meets her in this public Arcadia he will be justified in expecting a bow, if not a smile and word.

To this intense chagrin, however, his sister has a permissive plan about "seeing the town."

"And as I can have as much as I like of Clement's society at home, you'll take his escort duty off his hands and come with me, won't you, dear Arch?" she says, guilelessly, and Arch, who has an idea that all these influences which are adverse to his wishes are wholly undisguised, goes with the best grace he can assume, and gives up what he firmly believes to be a blessed opportunity.

"It's a lovely place to be in for a day or two, isn't it?" Mrs. Dumorest says, regarding Torquay very tolerantly from one of its wood-crowned heights; "but, oh, Arch! what a dull place to be in for more than a day or two; tropical heat, and typical invalids and adventurers of both sexes! And the worst of it is, the enervation caused by the former renders one unable to combat the insidious advances of the latter."

"I never find the heat tropical and I never meet the adventurers," Arch replies, indifferently.

He has known his sister all his life, but he has not learnt yet that she almost invariably has another object besides the plain one which she puts before him.

"And you don't know one when you see one," his sister laughs. "When they're revealed the revelation always falls upon you like a shock. Do you remember the Dacoustas? You thought him such a nice fellow, and her such a charming woman, didn't you?"

"I said of him that he knew a good horse when he saw one, and handled a team splendidly, and of her that she was a pretty woman, and knew how to put her clothes on, and I say the same still," Mr. Saltoun says, sturdily.

"Oh, Arch, when I've told you that it's more than suspected that he is the villainous groom and she the thieving lady's maid who, after murdering their master and mistress in Italy, ran away with all the money and papers and jewels that they could lay hands on!"

"Well, I'm not a detective," Arch replies; "it's no use putting me on the scent of a suspicion. I'm not a likely fellow to try and track it out, am I?"

"No; and I'm afraid you're not a likely fellow to be warned by it against involving yourself with—"

Mrs. Dumorest pauses and searches the depths of her store of language for an appellation that shall at once describe and denounce Mrs. Cardigan without exactly naming that lady. "Impostor" Mrs. Cardigan doubtless is, still it would be too strong a word to apply to her without the faintest shadow of a cause.

"Well?" Arch questions, dragging his eyes away from the "Imperial Hotel" to which he is longing to return, and back to the subject which has not the slightest interest for him.

"Well—with other people who are probably of that class, shall I say?"

"Certainly not, dear, I'll fight shy of the Dacoustas all the days of my life; now we must go back and look up Clem, and get underweigh for Plymouth."

He speaks with an utter absence of anything like either a vexed or pleased apprehension of the gist of her remarks. She is not half satisfied with her brother's easy acceptance of her terms. She would be far more at rest if Arch would only offer his customary half-bois, easily-overcome opposition to an plan of hers that runs counter to his lightly made and readily forgotten projects.

"Can that horrible woman already have established a system of communication with him?" the sister thinks, suspiciously, and the suspicion makes her very silent as they wend their way back to the "Imperial Hotel."

Surely the fates are against Mrs. Dumorest. There at the entrance door of the hotel stands a beautiful dark grey mare, and the lady who has just put her hand on the pommel preparatory to springing into the saddle is none other than the suspected Mrs. Cardigan herself. She does not look like a woman about whom a single unworthy suspicion can arise as on catching sight of the advancing pair she turns away from her horse and with a bright, frank smile goes to meet Archibald Saltoun's sister.

"I have been leaving my card and my apologies for my dog's bad conduct at your door," she says, addressing Mrs. Dumorest.

"He didn't behave badly. I only felt half afraid of meeting him," Mrs. Dumorest rejoins.

"You distrusted him in fact?" the dog's mistress laughs, blithely; "so many people do, and give him a bad name because of their own groundless fears. You are admiring my mare," she adds, abruptly, turning to Mr. Saltoun. "I wish you could see her trot."

"I wish I could," he answers, rather rapturously; "and why can't I, if you're willing to show me the sight?"

"Quite willing; I'm proud of Steel Grey's trotting. We might arrange some excursions together. Do you ride?" Mrs. Cardigan says, carelessly, to Arch's sister.

"I do; but the excursions can't be arranged. I fear, as we're leaving Torquay in an hour,"

Mrs. Dumorest replies, with an air of ill-concealed triumph.

"Leaving, are you?" Mrs. Cardigan speaks, in accents of the most careless indifference, but as she turns away after taking a frigid leave of Mrs. Dumorest, she says a word or two to Arch that removes the impression of indifference.

"You're a great sportsman, I know, Mr. Saltoun, so I should like you to see my mare trot; when shall you be back here?"

Her tones are very low; even the groom who stands at Steel Grey's head fails to catch the import of her words as she bends her head down while Mr. Saltoun adjusts her foot to the stirrup.

"In three days," he mutters, looking up with a flushed face and flashing eyes.

"Three days. Well, I will wait three days, though I'm tired of this place," she whispers, laughingly.

And then with a slight inclination of the head to the man with whose heart she is beginning to play, Gladys Cardigan goes off on her bonnie mare to put the finishing touch of beauty to every portion of the scenery through which she passes.

His sister is waiting for him in the hall, and as he joins her she says:

"Did that woman ask you to call on her, Arch?"

"She did not," he answers, decidedly, but he omits to mention that Mrs. Cardigan has offered the far more potent flattery of promising to "wait for him for three days" in a place of which she declares herself to be "already tired." "Flo wouldn't understand it, and it would only put her out," he says, saving his conscience as to his reticence with the reflection that he is reticent only to spare his sister annoyance.

"Really! I wonder at her missing such an opportunity," Mrs. Dumorest says, drily. "What an actress the woman is, Arch. The hall-porter tells me her horse has been at the hall door one hour. She has evidently been waiting about to give us the benefit of the sight of her in the saddle!"

"And a splendid sight it is. She has the prettiest seat I ever saw, and know's what she's about with her hands, too; she tells me that mare of hers is a clipper to trot," Arch says, with fine open admiration.

"Her phraseology is hardly as 'pretty' as her seat, or as well managed as her hands," Mrs. Dumorest says, coldly, and Arch Saltoun feels, for the first time in his life, that his sister has it in her to be unjustly spiteful.

"She didn't use the expression you cavil at, Flo. That was my own, as you might have guessed."

They have reached their own room by this time, and Florence Dumorest, who really loves her brother with the best love she has to give, puts her arm round his neck and kisses away his annoyance.

"Forgive me for having viciously tried to twist everything to her disadvantage, dear Arch. It's only because I can't bear to see you admire a doubtful woman. But we've seen the last of her, I hope, so we'll say no more about her."

Two hours after this, as Mrs. Cardigan comes at a sharp trot alone the Paignton road on her return home, she sees the graceful "Ghost," with all her canvas spread, sailing out of the harbour, and a smile covers her face at the sight.

"He will return, I know he will!" she says, with a light laugh. "And he'll come back expecting me to beam with delight at his doing so; and, probably, I shall gratify him, though if the yacht went down this moment with all hands on board, we wouldn't break our trot or our hearts at the sight, would we, my mare?"

It would be painful to Archibald Saltoun's feelings, but well for his future if he could see the look of sunny ferocity which passes over Mrs. Cardigan's expressive face as she thus makes her confidence to Steel Grey.

Four days have passed since the "Ghost" sailed out of Torquay harbour, and Mrs. Cardigan, weary of the warm monotony which reigns among the wooded slopes of the Queen of the West, has ordered Britton to pack her trunks,

and the grooms to prepare the horses for travelling.

In her innermost soul she is relieved that the incentive to stay on has not been given her. In a spasm of unusual generosity she almost rejoices that she has not been able to lead into temptation the only man who has ever impressed her with a belief in his absolute honesty and integrity.

She has not dined at the public table once since the first night of her arrival. In vain the old clergyman whom she has bewitched by the zeal and enthusiasm she displays for the sports he loves to describe looks with anxious eyes each night for the "pretty little woman whose figure looks so uncommonly neat on horseback."

She neither gladdens his eyes nor pains the vision of two or three of the more sensitively correct of her own sex, who declare that they "positively shudder" and "tremble" and experience sundry other queer abnormal physical sensations at sight of her.

She goes on her indifferent way neither seeking to deprecate animadversion nor avoid shuddering and trembling remark.

To all outward appearance she is a perfectly prosperous, independent, happy woman. Only herself and Britton know what a sham is the prosperity—what a farce the independence—what a falsehood the happiness, and even Britton does not know these things with perfect understanding.

Britton is grumbling to-night after the soul-wearing manner of powerful, privileged servants, for her mistress's last caprice to leave this hotel where Britton is so exceedingly comfortable seems naturally enough to Britton to be a most unreasonable act.

"There is no rest for the sole of your foot, Miss Gladys," she says, complainingly. "The money it costs you in going from place to place would keep you respectable in a quiet home of your own for months."

Gladys listens laughingly.

"You funny Britton!" she says, good-temperedly. "To think you have known me all this time and don't know yet that I don't want to have a 'quiet home' of my own, or 'to be respectable,' or to do anything but please myself for the minute in any way that it pleases me to do so!"

The change in her expression, voice, and manner as she utters these last words would be shocking and terrible to the majority of observers of Mrs. Cardigan's habits and customs. The fair Gladys, who, in her opening sentence, has been all good-humour, gladness, and insouciance, develops in her closing remark an amount of eager, angry energy that is almost ferocious. But apparently Britton does not mark the change. At any rate she takes no heed of it, but just goes on as if her mistress had not spoken:

"And the next best thing to a quiet, comfortable home of your own is an hotel like this, to my mind. It all goes on just like clockwork here—no slurry nor hurry, meals to the minute, all as pleasant as possible—"

Gladys recovers her amiability, and stops her serving-woman with a laugh.

"What a Paradise you're painting, Britton. 'Meals to the minute!' I don't care, you see, whether I have them to the minute or not. I am dull here. I've been dull wherever I've been for several years, but if I rove about long enough I shall find some place at last where I can be actively happy, or miserable, or good, or wicked. I don't know which it will be, but it will be one of those same things that you'll see me before long."

She turns abruptly to a glass and scans her own face carefully as she speaks, as if she would read in her own eloquent eyes the story of what her life is going to be.

"Ah!" she exclaims, impatiently; "the very feeling that made me look made them inquiring, not prophetic! Go on packing, Britton, and don't glare at me!"

"Miss Gladys, it's you that's glaring," the woman replies.

Then she adds, pausing in her occupation of pressing rich dresses down into a narrow com-

pass—adds affectionately, with a touch of real feeling:

"Why don't you go home, and be 'good and happy' there in your proper place, my dear; and make them that's mourning for you happy too?"

Gladys has moved from the mirror to the window while Britton has been speaking. Now she turns round with light in her eyes, warmth and colour in her face; but these adjuncts to her beauty have not been called forth by Britton's words.

"Get my hat and cloak," she says; and in another minute she and Vengeance are on the terrace, where Arch Saltoun is waiting for a glimpse of her!

CHAPTER IV.

OVER THE BRINK.

She's light as air,
False as the fowler's artful snare,
Inconstant as the passing wind,
As winter's dreary pool, unkind.

ANOTHER minute and she is down on the terrace, and all his motive for coming back is laid bare before her keen vision, in the moment that he springs to meet her, exclaiming:

"They told me you were going to-morrow, and I feared I shouldn't see you."

"Ah, it's Mr. Saltoun," she says, pausing to drape her cloak about her in more graceful folds before she extends a temperately welcoming hand to him. "Is it possible, once having got away from its slumber-inducing spell, that you have come back to 'cat lotus' of your own free will in beautiful, torpid Torquay?"

"I've come back because I promised that I would come, and because I wanted to see you again," he answers, simply, showing his admiration for her and the disappointment he feels at the reception she has given him, with the ingenuousness of a child.

"What insufficient reasons, Mr. Saltoun," she says, with the smile kindling in her face. You 'promised me that you would come back,' and for the sake of seeing me you have kept your promise! What insufficient reasons for coming!"

"To me they're more than sufficient. I have kept my word—and seen you."

"And I had forgotten that you had given me your word, and I'm going away to-morrow, and even now I'm laughing at you for the honourable conscientiousness which brings you to me, and for the childlike faith you have in my being worth seeking. I am true for the moment. Mr. Saltoun, take my advice. I charm you by my whims and humours, and by the way I manage into apparent beauty what would be only moderate good looks in another woman. I charm you by my seeming frankness, by my variability, by the very way in which I show you my worst! And all the while I do I wonder why I do it, for you're not the man I want to charm. Go away from me now; before you discover what a stucco impostor I am! Go away from me before I teach you that even stuccoed buildings in falling may crush good men in their ruins!"

She is in earnest. With real pain he realises that this light, buoyant beauty is in dreadful, desperate, cruel, earnest now!

He realises something else, too, something which it is even harder for a man, whose life's happiness is at stake, to realise; and that is that this desperate, cruel, earnest bearing of hers is no pretty caprice.

It is horribly genuine, this endeavour she is making to warn him off. And he knows that he will not be warned off, and an instinct teaches him that he will bitterly repent him in the time to come of his infatuated obstinacy. Yet still he blindly disregards the instinct, and with the tenderest and most eloquent words he has at command, seeks to win at least her forbearance towards his presence.

The tenderest and most eloquent words he has at his command! how impotent they are, how feebly futile they sound, even in his own ears, as he utters them! How ridiculous she allows

him to perceive she considers them to be, as with a light that is half smile and half moon-beam playing over her mobile face she stands in her motionless ease and grace, listening to him.

"You shall hear why I have come back," he says, in those broken tones that men are apt to employ when they desire to carry a tender point, and the one besieged does not appear ready to surrender immediately. "I came back because my heart has never spoken before as it has about you, and it told me to come back and tell you of my love, and ask for yours in return, Gladys!"

He tries to take her hand as he utters her name, and she just steps out of his reach, and regards him with a wistful, curious look of inquiry.

"You came back to tell me this, did you, really? Don't think I'm doubting your integrity in any way, but it is so strange to me that anything I expect should should come to pass. I own that I did expect this much of you, and now that you've realised my expectations I am so surprised that I don't know what to do with you."

"You're not going to refuse me, at any rate," he says, gaining confidence.

"I don't know about that yet; I only know that I am going to shock you; perhaps when I've shocked you, you will retract your offer of marriage; you needn't be afraid to do it, it was verbal; no witnesses were present, and I won't bring an action for breach of promise."

"How horribly you talk," he interrupts.

"Yes—do I not—horribly! I say out so plainly not only what I think and fear, but what you think and fear also; and do you know I act even more horribly than I talk; he warned in time; leave me in this romantic situation, with all sorts of pretty reminiscences in your mind about me, and go back a free man to your country gentleman's duties and your sister's safe keeping!"

She flashes the last words out at him as she turns away, but there is no anger in her dulcet tones, no anger in her dancing eyes. She is not surprised when she reaches the steps that lead to the hotel to find him at her side, humble, pertinacious, hat in hand, suppliant, but determined to have a hearing.

"Mrs. Cardigan, you need not tell me what to do with myself if you reject me, but you must tell me in plainer words than you have used yet that you do reject me before I accept my dismissal."

She faces round and begins draping the lace hood of her cloak coquettishly about her graceful, slender head.

Pretty, supple creature, perfect combination of Cleopatra and the snake as she is, it does occur to him that this frivolous consideration for her own appearance at such a moment denotes a vain and superficial mind.

But he banishes this condemnatory thought as soon as it arises, telling himself that it is only natural and proper that she should be careless and indifferent still, for he has not yet waked the echoes of her heart.

When once he has succeeded in doing that she "will answer to his tone as softly and thrillingly as even he desires," he tells himself, proudly, and thus reassured, by his own most fallacious reasoning, he goes on:

"I know there is something vague and unseemly in pursuing you at this hour."

"I assure you the hour seems to me as fitting a one as you could find," she laughs, gently.

"Then I will ask your pardon for the way and the place I have chosen in which to make my meaning clear to you," he says, half amused, half provoked by the critically easy air which this woman, whose character seems to partake of the nature of the kaleidoscope, has now assumed.

"The hour, the manner, and the place are all that I could wish them to be," she replies, coming briskly down the two steps she has ascended while listening to him, and taking his arm. "Come away, down the most perpendicular and picturesque path we can find to the water's edge; Torbay looks lovely to-night;

come, and enjoy its beauties, and just let this subject which is disturbing you rest for a time, or, better still, dismiss it altogether."

He is so much delighted with the present moment that he fancies he can well afford to let the subject rest for a time.

She—being kind to this degree—will surely allow him to resume it in the morning when a night's reflection will have shown her that his proffered love is no ardent sham, but a loving, beautiful truth. How he will woo her on the morrow. How he will delight in teaching her to take the first timid steps that will lead her to return his passion.

How, when he has won this beautiful, bright, bewitching, undefinable stranger, he will glory in acclimatising her to his own home atmosphere, and assimilating her with his own favourite relations and friends. What a crown, she, with this winning grace of hers, this manner that makes her a mixture of queen and child, will be to him in that great, grand, sombre (truth to tell, sometimes stupid) Somersetshire home of his, where the Saltouns have held their haughty own since the day a cadet of their house followed Mary Stuart's son from bonnie Scotland.

How carefully he will provide that she shall always be superbly mounted, superbly dressed, superbly associated and surrounded in every way. She does not know yet what a monarch he is in his own land. He lays the knowledge that he is so lovingly to his heart, for will it not redound to the honour and glory of this sweet stranger whom he is seeking for his wife?

Yes, she is this, "a stranger," and he is seeking her for his wife as eagerly as if she was the known and pedigreed daughter of a hundred earls.

They have reached a little narrow platform just above the water's edge, as he remembers this truth, and he hates himself for having remembered it at all, when Mrs. Cardigan takes her hand from his arm, advances perilously close to the low, slight hedge of spindle and rock-rose which borders the steep cliff, and says as if in answer to his thought:

"Just think, Mr. Saltoun, if I were to slip through, and go down, down, beneath this boiling surge, and never come up again; there's not a being in the world, save Britton and Vengeance, who would ask what had become of me; think of this truth, and take it as another warning against the fate you fancy you want to fulfil."

She is on the very brink, on the crumbling, treacherous edge of the cliff as she speaks, and his impulse is to leap forward and clasp her in safety to his heart ere the echo of her words dies in silence on his ears.

But he dare not move. Her back is to the precipice and she is waving to and fro as she restlessly arranges and rearranges the black lace draperies, by means of which she gets such ever-varying effects.

"For Heaven's sake stand still!" he mutters, passionately. "You frighten me! poised on the brink in that way. Come away."

"There is no danger!" she interrupts, blithely. "I am as sure-footed and as cool-headed as a goat or a born mountaineer. I am a mountaineer, in fact! Why don't you ask me who I am, and what I am, and where I came from?"

"I can't ask you anything while you flutter about in that way. How can you take pleasure in making my heart beat and my brain reel with pain and terror, when you can so easily make me mad with joy?"

She sinks down gracefully into a sitting posture upon the low, slender-stalked bushes, which bend under her weight, and sway seawards with her.

"My dear Mr. Saltoun, every word you utter shows me that the blind trust you have been exhibiting in me is only feigned; you evidently think that I am such an irresponsible idiot that I am not to be trusted to take care of myself, even in a place of such little peril as this, or you think (and this is worse) that I am such a capricious fool that I'm knowingly running a deadly risk for the sake of exciting your deeper

interest. Which weakness is it that you do accuse me of in your mind? And accusing me of either, is it possible that you can still want to marry me?"

He makes a movement to approach her for answer, and the wilful woman bends over the verge in a way that would cause a less supple and muscular woman than she is to lose her balance.

(To be Continued.)

ERMA'S VIGIL.

"The weary winds are out," she said;
"The waves are rough, and the rain is falling.

Low in the west, where the sunset died,

There is only a gleam of sullen red—
A wild sky darkening overhead;
And down by the reedy river side
Strange water-voices calling, calling.

"Cold and dark is the river's breast;
But lulled by the murmur of wind and billow,

Under the sun and the rain at rest,
She rocks the drowned on her reedy pillow,

While the slow years lag, and the swift years fly,
And the dead are forgotten—lull, lullaby!

"I watch from my lattice, low and dim,
The grey fog scudding before the gale;

I watch and weary," she said, "for him,
Till the sunsets darken, the twilights fail;

There is no light on sea or land—
The tide runs high and the rain is falling.

And up the bleak grey reach of sand
The cold white edge of the surf is crawling;

And oh! she weeps; "I wait in vain—
I weary and wait while the years go by.

I hear the sound of the lonesome rain—
The black waves lapping along the strand.

"The surging river, the gusty sigh
Of winds in the reeds; but never again

The creaking rudder, the flapping sail,
The harsh keel grating against the sand;

The eager step and the cheery hail.
Slow wanes the night, and the wrathful red

Of morning glimmers on land and sea.
Ah, when will the sweet dawn rise?"

she said,
"That bringeth my lost love back to me?"

And all by the side of the reedy river
A wild voice answers, "Never—never,

While Grief remembers, and Love in vain
Shall wait for their coming in sun and rain

Close to the cold dark river's breast
The dead lie quiet and full of rest.

And the slow years lag, and the swift years fly
They hear not; they heed not—lull, lullaby!"

E. A. B.

THE number of boys to be entered in the Royal naval training ships this year is 2,700.

PREVENTING COLLISIONS AT SEA.

IN regard to preventing collisions at sea, a correspondent suggests the following plan: Each vessel could carry four different coloured lights, say red for north, white for east, green for south, yellow for west; a set of these lights on each side of the vessel. If a vessel was going north it would hoist a red light; if going north-northeast, it would hoist one light under the red; if going northeast, two lights under the red; if east-northeast, three lights under the red; and so with east, south, and west, the white, green, or yellow lights could be raised, and the number of lights under them as the vessel is sailing points to the right of the direction for which the top light stands for.

During fogs, when the whistle has to be used, one long blast could mean north; two, east, one short and one long, south; two short and one long west; and as many short blasts as the vessel is steering points to the right of any of these points.

THE CAUSE OF SNORING.

IN the act of breathing, the air may travel to and from the lungs through the channels of the mouth or the nose. Both channels unite in a common cavity just below the soft palate, which is attached by one end to the hard palate, or bone forming the roof of the mouth and the floor of the nose. The other end of the soft palate hangs loose, and is moved by the currents of air passing in and out of the lungs, as a window-curtain is flapped in a breeze.

If the air passes through the nose alone, the end of the palate is pressed gently down upon the tongue so as to lessen the movement or vibration, and no sound is heard. But if the mouth as well as the nose be open, so that two currents of air pass in and out together during the act of breathing, the soft palate is thrown into rapid and sonorous vibrations, and what we call snoring is the result.

It follows that the remedy for snoring is to keep the mouth shut, and admit air to the lungs only through the channel of the nose. This can be effected by means of a simple cap fitting the head snugly, and united by an elastic band, near the ear on each side, to a cap of soft material fitting the chin.

FLOODING THE DESERT OF SAHARA.

OF the vast plain or hollow in the desert, known as El Juf, the greatest length of the depression is about 500 miles, the breadth about 120, and the area about 80,000 square miles. This vast area is depressed about 200 feet below sea level. This depression was formerly connected with the Atlantic Ocean by the channel Saklet El Hamra, or Red Channel, which had in process of time been blocked up with sand. It was proposed to reopen this channel and let in the sea, which would cover the great area above described and enable commerce to be carried on with places in the interior, rich in produce of various kinds.

The submerging of the basin of El Juf would open up a navigable highway for the commerce of the world to the heart of Africa, and present an extensive field for the influence of civilisation.

FRANCOIS VINCENT RASPAIL, the celebrated French chemist and veteran champion of the people, is dead. He was within a few days of attaining his 84th year.

MEN OF FORCE.—There is always room for a man of force, and he makes room for many. Society is a troop of thinkers, and the best heads among them take the best places. A feeble man can see the farms that are fenced and tilled, the houses that are built. The strong man sees possible houses and farms. His eye makes estates as fast as the sun breeds clouds.



[EVERIL'S ANNOUNCEMENT.]

SINNED AGAINST: NOT SINNING.

CHAPTER XXIII.

One fool makes many,
But an old fool's the worst of any.

VERY lovely looked Everil Vane as she related to Sir Percival Rossmore the story which her grandmother told her.

As she did so:

The eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
You might have almost said her body thought.

Blank amazement, not unmixed with anger, was depicted on the baronet's face as he listened to her tale.

The girl never looked so distractingly, so enchantingly beautiful as she did when she stood before him and confessed herself to be a nameless nobody.

He did not want to give her up, but he was, naturally, annoyed at having been so deceived.

"Miss Vane," he said, a little stiffly, "I think I should have been told of all this."

"Such was my opinion, Sir Percival," she replied, bowing; "and when I found my grandmother had not informed you quite correctly as to my parentage, I determined to tell you myself."

"Your sense of honour does you credit, Miss Vane," said he, courteously.

"There is no very great credit that I can see in simply doing what is right," replied Everil. "Surely you do not for one moment fancy that I could marry you or any other man with the burden of that secret upon my soul?"

Sir Percival looked at the lovely young creature before him—at the high and noble expression of her countenance.

He did not want to give her up—she was so beautiful; but if there was one thing more

than a nother upon which he prided himself it was the blue-blood of his family throughout all its ramifications.

"Sir Percival Rossmore," continued the girl with the dignity of an unjustly discrowned queen, yet looking, in her fresh young loveliness, an empress of youth and beauty, "I release you from the proposals you were good enough to do me the honour to make to my grandmother for me."

A bright thought seemed to strike Sir Percival.

"Miss Vane," he said, eagerly, "will you sit down here and let us talk this matter over? It occurs to me that we may be able to avoid its having any publicity."

"What, or rather, which are you alluding to?" she inquired, as she seated herself beside Sir Percival, upon a shady, moss-grown bank, with daisies pied and violets blue. "Do you mean the unhappy circumstances which I have felt it to be my painful duty to tell you of; or do you allude to the proposal you made to my grandmother for me?"

"I allude to the circumstances which Lady Pendleton unwisely kept me in ignorance of."

"Proceed."

Everil bent her head, and the fays and dryads of the place might have marked:

A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent
shames,
In angel whiteness, bear away those blushes.

"Does anyone know this unfortunate story about your mother, Miss Vane?" he asked, thinking of how graceful-looking and slender was the little hand, encased in pale grey kid, which lay on the moss beside her.

"Not that I know of. But my grandmother can better inform you upon the subject than I can."

"I prefer arranging it all with you," he responded promptly. "There is no objection to

my doing so?"—spoken in an interrogative manner.

"Certainly not, if you prefer it."

She spoke in a cool, business-like tone, which grated upon Sir Percival's ear most unpleasantly.

"Then, since you have done your duty in telling me this story of your birth, and that you think it may be likely that no one in this country knows anything about it, why not leave them in ignorance. No one need ever know that you do not exactly hold the same position that you have always been judged entitled to as Lady Pendleton's granddaughter?"

Everil Vane made no answer. She had one wild, vague idea.

She wanted to get away—to leave Pendleton Hall and the daily terror of the chance of seeing Leopold Ormiston.

She wanted to do all this—to leave her love for what she believed to be the good of her beloved eventually—but she did not quite know how to do so.

Thus it was that marriage with Sir Percival Rossmore—much as she loathed the idea—seemed to her to be the one loophole for her.

Do not judge Everil Vane too harshly. Heaven knew that no one judged her so severely as she did herself.

She knew that an unloving marriage was a sin; but casuistry tried to make her think that by being a faithful and devoted and obedient wife to the man she had almost made up her mind to marry, that therefore much of the sin might be expiated.

Moreover, she was honest in her belief that she was acting for the ultimate happiness of the man she really loved.

Were he to marry her, she reflected, it would always be a sting in his bosom to think that the mother of his children, the chosen wife of his heart, was base-born.

These thoughts again rapidly flitted through her mind as she listened to Sir Percival Rossmore's speech.

"Before saying anything definite, do you not think it would be well for you to speak to my grandmother, and hear what she has to say."

"I don't think it at all necessary," he replied, a little impatiently; "evidently your grandmother is not alone willing, but anxious that you should marry me, otherwise she would have told me the tale you have now imparted to me."

"I suppose so," said Everil, wearily; "but at the same time I think I should like you to speak to her about it."

"I would do a very great deal to please you, Miss Vane," returned Sir Percival, "but in this particular instance I must beg for your forbearance."

"In what way?"

"Simply do not ask me to mention this subject to Lady Pendleton. I fear I could scarcely keep my equanimity as I ought were I to speak about it. Let the matter rest. Lady Pendleton did not think fit to tell me anything about it, therefore, if you, in the face of all you have told me,"—the elderly Sir Percival actually felt he was acting magnanimously towards this beautiful young girl—"you will consent to be my wife, affairs will stand as before, and Lady Pendleton and I need not have any conversation upon the tabooed subject."

It was now or never, Everil reflected. Did she refuse this offer she saw no chance of getting away from Pendleton Hall and from Leopold Orniston.

Her mind was in a whirl. She despised herself for the step she meditated taking, yet she saw no other path open to her.

Ashamed to dig, and too proud to beg, how many women are driven into unholy, because loveless, marriage—simply because social usages debar them from rendering themselves independent.

"Sir Percival Rossmore," she replied, very quietly, whilst her eyes rested upon a distant glade where she had oft-times walked with Leopold Orniston, "your offer is a most generous one. Before you ask me to give you a final answer, I wish you would reflect well upon what you have said to me."

Even then she was too proud to take him at his word.

"I have thought over it sufficiently," Sir Percival said. "If you are willing to keep this secret of your birth which has been so well kept hitherto, I am willing to make you my wife. I honestly confess it is a story which I should not care to have known."

"But suppose I were to marry you, Sir Percival," she suggested, "and that the story should become known when you could have no means of withdrawing?"

So dignified, gracious and beautiful did she look as she said the last words, that Sir Percival impulsively exclaimed:

"I am willing to take the risk."

"Then I thank you for the offer you have honoured me by making," said Everil, with a sick, sinking feeling at her heart, "and I am willing to become your wife."

"My dearest girl," exclaimed Sir Percival, rapturously, "you don't know how happy you have made me."

"I am much flattered to hear you say so," she replied, calmly. "Then at the same time, Sir Percival, I do not in any way wish to marry you under any false pretences whatever, so I had better tell you at once that I shall be a true and faithful wife to you, but I honestly confess my heart has no part in the bargain."

Sir Percival Rossmore was piqued.

It was not a gratifying thing to his vanity to hear that candid confession, but he thought he might as well put the best face possible upon the matter.

Moreover, in his secret heart of hearts, although he scarcely acknowledged it to himself, he had a rooted conviction that eventually she would become desperately in love with him!

"Your candour upon every subject does you credit, Miss Vane," he replied. "But why

should I call you 'Miss Vane' now. I may call you, 'Everil,' may I not?"

"Certainly, Sir Percival. I have given you the right to do so."

Her tones were very cold, and when Sir Percival took her hand, and bending towards her, kissed her pale cheek, the girl with difficulty repressed a little cry of emotion.

For with that kiss she felt she was bound to be this man's wife.

It was to her almost as binding as the marriage rite, since every act connected with her association with Sir Percival Rossmore must be more or less of a mere ceremony.

And thus it came to pass that Everil Vane returned to Pendleton Hall the betrothed wife of Sir Percival Rossmore.

No sooner did she enter the hall than she said:

"Where is Lady Pendleton?"

"In her boudoir, Miss Vane."

"I wish to speak to my grandmother alone," she said, turning to Sir Percival; "will you be good enough to excuse me?"

"Your wish must ever be my law," returned her elderly lover with an amorous glance; "but do not stay long away, my dearest. Every minute without you will now seem an age."

"I shall return to you as soon as possible," she said, calmly.

Having taken the yoke upon her, Everil was determined to bear it gracefully as well as meekly.

"Thank you," he ejaculated, grateful for even this crumb of consideration. "I shall await you in the library."

Everil passed through the hall, up the stairs, and entered Lady Pendleton's boudoir.

The old lady, carefully dressed, both as to hair, complexion, and attire, was reclining on a couch in a studied attitude, while Turrell, in a monotonous voice, read aloud for her a trashy novel.

"Grandmother, I wish to speak to you alone," said Everil, with such a tone of determination in her voice, that Lady Pendleton looked up at her in surprise.

"You had better go, Turrell," said the old lady, and Turrell departed, evidently offended at not being admitted to the conference.

"Grandmother," said Everil, coming to the point at once, "I have promised to marry Sir Percival Rossmore."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The tender grace of a day that is dead
Can never come back to me. TENNYSON.

"I AM afraid you have offended Turrell," was the first thing Lady Pendleton said, in an apprehensive tone. "What can you have to say," she continued, in a fretful manner, "that she may not listen to. She knows all my affairs—indeed, I wish others sympathised with me as Turrell does."

"I cannot see that I have given your maid any cause for offence," replied Everil, as she leisurely drew off her gloves. "If you choose to make her your confidant I do not."

"The overcharged heart must have some vent for its feelings," exclaimed Lady Pendleton, pathetically, the glamour of the last love scene in the novel hanging over her, "and you have no romance, no softness about you. You are utterly cold and heartless."

"Possibly," was all Everil replied.

"You are too practical to understand the deep workings of a nature like mine," exclaimed Lady Pendleton. "Well, and so you have promised to marry Sir Percival?"

"Yes."

"For once in your life you have consented to take my advice, and I venture to say you will never repent of having done so."

"I quite agree with you," said Everil. "I feel sure I shall never repent of this step, inasmuch as that I shall set out in life with Sir Percival without any hope of happiness. Therefore, as I expect nothing, I shall not be disappointed."

"Rubbish!" energetically ejaculated the old lady, her irate manner contrasting ludicrously with her former tone of sentimental languor. "You ought to consider yourself a very lucky young woman. You will have one of the best positions of any woman in the county—a magnificent establishment, splendid diamonds, and a good house in town during the season. I am sure I don't see what more you can want."

"I have the prospect of far more than I want in the way of worldly goods," replied Everil. "However, I have not come here to speak of my prospects. I wished merely to tell you I have told Sir Percival everything you have told me concerning my unfortunate birth."

"What!"

Lady Pendleton pitched her fan to the other end of the room, sat bolt upright on the sofa, and stared at her granddaughter.

The old woman's face became distorted with rage.

The perspiration started upon her brow. She forgot all her anxiety about her appearance, and her whole frame shook violently.

"What!" she exclaimed, almost with a shriek, as she perceptibly became livid through the bluntness and rouge with which her face was thickly overspread. "You do not mean to tell me that you have told Sir Percival Rossmore the story I told you of your mother not having been married to your father?"

"Yes."

"You actually told him so?" she reiterated, her voice trembling with passion.

"So I have said," replied Everil, in a perfectly calm, self-possessed tone of voice. "I told Sir Percival Rossmore that I was base-born."

"And he is willing to marry you?"

"He is willing to marry me."

Everil stood with her hands folded and confronted her astonished grandmother.

"Of course if he is there is no harm done," said Lady Pendleton, in a relieved voice. "But I must say I cannot see that there was any necessity whatever for your telling him."

"I did not wish to marry any man with such a cloud hanging over me," was the reply.

"Humph!" ejaculated the old lady, revolving in her mind what she could tell Sir Percival so as to make her own story to him seem all the more plausible.

"That is all I wished to say," said Everil, adding, as she made a movement to go:

"Shall I ring for Turrell, grandmother?"

"Yes."

Everil obeyed, and then, leaving the room, went to the study, where she found Sir Percival awaiting her.

Upon the table beside the old gentleman lay several morocco cases, and one, which he held open in his hand, he was contemplating with evident satisfaction.

He placed a chair for Everil as she entered, and the girl was the first to speak.

"Sir Percival," she said, "I have just seen my grandmother, and I have informed her that I considered it right to make you acquainted with the circumstances attending my birth, and have therefore done so. It may be unpleasant for you to speak upon the subject again, and as she knows all about it there is now no necessity for you to do so."

Sir Percival looked flattered.

"You are very thoughtful," he replied, "to have spared me the unpleasant task of speaking upon the subject."

"Pray don't mention it," she said, "and the matter need not be mentioned between us again with your permission."

"Your will is my pleasure," gallantly and tritely exclaimed Sir Percival.

He congratulated himself upon getting such a sweet and amiable wife, and actually felt that she was worth—the diamonds.

"My dear girl," (Everil winced) said he, opening the largest of the morocco cases, "here is a little present which I have brought you, and which I trust you will do me the favour to accept. I am quite aware," he continued, with old-fashioned politeness, "that it is only paint-

ing the lily and trying to add additional bloom to the rose even for one moment to fancy that these gems can give an added lustre to your charms. But, such as they are, will you accept them?"

During this speech, which Sir Percival Rosmore delivered with evident gratification, Everil had been looking at the exquisite gems, which glittered and gleamed and scintillated in the sunshine pouring in through the oriel window of the study.

She hated the look of them, much as she admired them.

They seemed to her as part of the price she was receiving for delivering herself up to Sir Percival Rosmore.

The ornaments comprised a magnificent necklace, ear-rings, bracelet, locket, pendant, and two diamond stars to be worn in the hair.

Lady Pendleton had diamonds and other jewels of every description, but never before had Everil seen any to equal the magnificence and brilliancy of those which Sir Percival now offered to her.

"You are most generous," she said, "and I should show an equal want of appreciation of your kindness as of taste were I to refuse them; but I hardly dare take them. They are too splendid for a girl brought up as simply as I have been."

"You will require all these things when I take you to London," he replied, with an air of proprietorship which rather annoyed Everil. "You know," he continued, "you must come up to town in the spring to be presented."

Everil bowed her head.

"As you wish," was all she said.

"Will you do me the favour of wearing these diamonds to-night?" he asked.

"Yes."

Everil was too well-bred to think of refusing this man any reasonable request since she had agreed to become his wife.

She determined not to simulate affection, but duty, consideration, and obedience she made up her mind to render to him.

Sir Percival was charmed with her ready acquiescence in all his wishes.

He even went so far as to advance and put his arm around his betrothed.

Everil shuddered.

The only man whose arms had been around her—whose kisses she had felt upon her lips—was Leopold Ormiston.

Until Sir Percival made these affectionate advances he had been just tolerable, but now she felt that was more than she could bear.

Until then she never fully recognised the horrible degradation of a woman selling herself to any man—the utter misery of a loveless marriage.

"Sir Percival," she said, rising, and doing her best not to let him see that she shrank from his embrace, "will you excuse my leaving you for the present? I have some letters to write, and in the meantime my grandmother will, I have no doubt, be delighted to see you in her boudoir."

"But we were to go out to drive this afternoon, were we not?" he asked, looking with admiration upon the beautiful woman of whom he hoped soon to be the proud possessor.

"I did not hear anything about it," she replied; "but if grandmother wishes it no doubt she will send and let me know."

"My dear girl, do you think I could enjoy the drive unless you accompanied us?"

"You are very good to say so."

"Then you will come?"

"Certainly, since you wish it."

And she moved towards the door.

"Will you not take these with you?" said Sir Percival, proffering the morocco cases as he opened the door for her.

"Thank you, Sir Percival."

She took them from his hand and walked slowly up the stairs until she gained her own room.

Then, locking the door, she spread out all the glittering gems upon the table, and looked at them.

The clear, frosty, glittering, iris-hued brilliants!

They represented thousands of pounds. Everil knew enough about them to know that.

She knew that many a time she would wear them with a weary heart and an aching brow, whilst longing "for the days that are no more."

And then she opened a little old-fashioned cabinet in which she was accustomed to keep her few treasures.

She took from it a small volume of Tennyson's poems containing that sweetest one, "Locksley Hall."

She opened the book and read on the fly-leaf: "To E. V. from L. O."

It was the only gift Leopold Ormiston had ever given her save a few flowers.

A few flowers!

She opened another drawer, and there they were yet, or, rather, the withered wreaths of what had once been blooming roses.

"Fit emblems of my future," she said, to herself, as she gazed in dry-eyed agony at the crumbling leaves. "All sweetness, life, and vigour gone out of my existence, and only the withered husks left. But I cannot destroy these last treasures to-day. No! no! Not to-day!"

CHAPTER XXV.

A woman's way is the wind's way,
And the wind's way is a wild, wild way.

PURON.

WHEN Leopold Ormiston left Ulrica Warner at the quarryman's cottage he pursued his way leisurely along the road, thinking deeply.

There was a curious expression upon his face as he paced slowly along until he came within sight of his own pretty old homestead.

It formed a quaint, picturesque feature in the landscape.

Built of grey stone, after the fashion of all old English farmhouses, with its red-tiled roof, and heavily-set latticed windows, it had sheltered many a successive generation of Ormiston—staunch yeomen, who, when occasion had required, had fought for their sovereign and for the honour of old England.

And Leopold Ormiston was a thorough Englishman, with an abhorrence of all that was deceitful.

Honest, singleminded, and straightforward, he had a hatred of anyone or anything which could be construed into anything like underhand conduct.

These thoughts had been fermenting in Leopold Ormiston's shrewd mind for many hours past—but of what had aroused the suspicion we shall speak further on.

To return to Ulrica Warner. Anyone to have seen the rector's kind daughter in the quarryman's cottage, as she dolefully arranged the pillows for the invalid, poured out the soup into a basin, and tried to induce her to drink it; would have endorsed her father's words—that she was invaluable in the parish.

But during it all Ulrica scarcely knew what she was doing.

Her mind was in a whirl, such as no remembrance of her perfidious conduct could have put it into.

The cause was that Leopold Ormiston had spoken in a semi-confidential manner to her, had even expressed a wish to call upon her at the Rectory, and Ulrica Warner, with the wilful blindness of passion, construed these remarks of his almost into professions of love.

She little dreamt that in williness and diplomacy she had at length met her match. But the diplomacy of each one was very differently directed.

"Ah, Miss Ulrica," said the sick woman, "I'm sure, as I said to John this morning, I don't know what the parish would do without you!"

"You could easily get someone to take my place, Margaret," replied, Ulrica, modestly.

"Meaning no disrespect, miss, I venture to say as how we couldn't," said Margaret, the grateful creature really meaning what she said.

"Why, where is there a lady in the whole parish does as much for the poor about as you do, miss?"

"Oh, it is the duty of the females of the rector's family to look after the sick and the women

and children. So you must not think anything of it."

"It's just like you to say so, miss; but you can't deny but I speak the truth. Why, there are no other ladies living here all the year round, except old Lady Pendleton and Miss Vane, and no one could say that they were much good!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Ulrica, with a show of indignant partisanship, "you quite wrong both Lady Pendleton and Miss Vane. They are both most kind-hearted."

"Are they, miss?" Margaret asked in that meaning tone always assumed by the commonplace mind when it wants to be questioned upon any particular subject.

"They are indeed," warmly reiterated Ulrica. "Miss Vane is the dearest friend I have in the world."

"Well, then, miss—why, even if she is, I can't help saying that I don't care much for her. There she goes by with her proud white face, and just bows her head as cold as if people were dirt under her feet. And she needn't be so conceited neither, for everybody knows that she has no money nor anything but what the old lady will give her."

Ulrica knew that. She also knew that many and many a time had Everil bitterly lamented her poverty to her, chiefly because it hindered her from ministering to the pleasures of others. But she said nothing of this.

"And as for the old lady—old Lady Pendleton, I mean, miss," continued Margaret, garrulously, "why, she never does anything for anyone about. She thinks more of dressing herself up like a young girl and flaunting about as if she was eighteen."

"Oh, Margaret, I assure you you misjudge both Miss Vane and Lady Pendleton!" said Ulrica, reproachfully. "Just think of how kind they are every Christmas in giving beef and coal to all the cottagers on the estate."

"It's like your kind heart to take their part," said Margaret, "but," she continued, shrilly, "don't you know, miss, that the beef and the coal doesn't come out of Lady Pendleton's pocket? Old Sir Philip left money for that in his will when he died."

"So I have heard"—Ulrica never had heard anything about it, but it was part of her tactics never to pretend ignorance of anything save for some especial purpose—"but that is of no consequence, the benefit comes from the family all the same."

"I hear Miss Vane is going to be married," said Margaret, who dearly loved a bit of gossip. "You don't say so?" This time it suited Ulrica to appear ignorant. "Well, I am surprised she has not told me anything about it."

"Deed and she is, miss," exclaimed Margaret, with a certain amount of satisfaction at being, as she supposed, the first to tell the bit of news to the rector's daughter.

"Have you heard to whom she is going to be married?" inquired Ulrica, who wanted to find out all she could.

"Lor! bless your heart! yes, miss!" said Margaret. "Miss Vane's going to be married to Sir Percival Rosmore that's staying at Pendleton Hall now."

"Yes, I know Sir Percival is at present on a visit with Lady Pendleton."

"I heard it all, miss, from my niece Bessy Tower, that's Miss Vane's maid. She says Sir Percival is an old gentleman, too old for Miss Vane, but that the young lady's bent on marrying him."

"Is she?"

Ulrica can scarcely restrain her impatience and the anxiety she feels to hear all about this matter.

"So Bessy says, but Miss Warner, dear, it's a bad thing for a young woman to marry an old man for money as Miss Vane is going to do."

"Perhaps Miss Vane cares for this gentleman," mildly and charitably suggested Ulrica.

"Not she, miss," asserted Margaret, emphatically; "she doesn't care a bit for him."

"How do you know?"

Ulrica became doubly interested.

"Oh, no matter how I know," said Margaret, circularly shutting up her lips tightly, as much

as to say that no one should ever get her to say anything did she not wish to do so.

"I really cannot see how you can know anything about Miss Vane's likes or dislikes, Margaret," replied Ulrica, who was dying to hear more, but who, in her character of the rector's daughter, did not dare to seem too anxious for any gossip, "and it is scarcely in accordance with Christian charity," she continued, acting up to her rôle, "to credit Miss Vane with motives which after all may have even no foundation at all."

"But I know they have, miss. Why," and here Margaret sank her voice to a lower tone, "do you know, miss, there's a gentleman living not far from this who'd do anything in the world if Miss Vane would only marry him?"

"I am not surprised at that," said Ulrica. "Miss Vane is a very pretty girl."

"She is, miss, and he's as fine a gentleman as you'd meet in England."

"Do I know him?"

"Maybe you do, miss. Why, what am I saying!" she exclaimed, "of course you must know him, Miss Warner, for he's one of the first people in the parish. I mean Mr. Ormiston."

Even at hearing Leopold Ormiston's name thus casually mentioned, Ulrica Warner's face flushed, and her heart beat rapidly.

"Oh, I think you must be labouring under some mistake, Margaret," she said. "Miss Ormiston is not in Miss Vane's sphere of life, and I am sure Lady Pendleton would never hear of such a thing as a marriage between her granddaughter and a person in Mr. Ormiston's position."

"Well, miss, all I can say is," continued Margaret, garrulously, "that Miss Vane and Mr. Ormiston meets one another and keep company. My husband saw them ever so often round by the river, and he said they were as fine a pair as you'd wish to see."

"Oh, you must not gossip about these matters, Margaret," said Ulrica. "I shall see Lady Pendleton to-morrow or next day, and I shall hear all about Miss Vane's engagement, no doubt."

"Bessy does say, miss," continued Margaret, "that Sir Percival is that wild in love with Miss Vane, and he has given her diamonds fit for a queen."

"Well, I am sure Miss Vane will grace them better than many a queen," replied Ulrica, with her most good-natured and cheerful air. "She is so beautiful, however, that she does not want anything to enhance her loveliness."

There were footsteps heard outside the kitchen, and Margaret's motherly instincts told her it was two of her elder children who had come home from afternoon school.

The door of the bedroom was opened, and a bright-looking little girl of about ten years presented herself, holding something half behind her back.

"Well, Sarah, and how are you?" said Ulrica, amiably, proffering her hand to the child, who dropped a courtesy and looked confused.

"Quite well, thank you, miss," said the little girl, sidling up to her mother's bed, and laying something upon it surreptitiously.

The action did not escape the quick eyes of Ulrica; she gave a keen glance; she actually started, for there was her grey gossamer veil!

"What is that you have got, Sarah?" she inquired, taking it up in an almost shaking hand, but quickly regaining her self-possession.

"Something father found in the quarry, miss, and he gave it to me when I took his dinner to him," said Sarah, gazing with longing eyes on the bit of finery.

"It is a veil."

Ulrica proffered that piece of information, but Sarah, with true feminine instinct, had found that out long before.

"Yes, miss."

"Of course it is not fit for a little girl like you to wear," said Ulrica, in her most Sunday-school tones. "What are you going to do with it?"

"I don't know, miss," replied poor Sarah,

who had had gorgeous visions of her grandeur in appearing arrayed in all her veiled glory at the approaching Sunday school feast.

"Miss Warner is right," said Margaret, who had her own visions, but they were of soup and tea, and she did not like to offend Ulrica, "it's not fit for a little girl like you to wear, Sarah."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Ulrica, "I'll give you a sixpence for your veil, Sarah. You can put the sixpence in your moneybox, but you know the veil is of no use to you."

Of course Ulrica carried her point. She generally did. And she walked home to the Rectory with one evidence against her completely in her own hands.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT IN PHOTOGRAPHY.

It often happens that photographers are restricted and hampered in their work by want of suitable light; that is, a steady and uniformly diffused one, in which the actinic rays are in their proper proportion. This occurs chiefly in work conducted under conditions unfavourable to the use of the natural light of the sun, as for instance in cloudy weather or at certain hours of daylight. Sometimes, too, it is desirable to obtain a photographic representation of places partially or wholly inaccessible to sunlight, as in mining excavations or in the interior of peculiarly constructed buildings, and not unfrequently the darkest hours of the night are ones in which the delineation, if practicable, would be the most serviceable.

Many suggestions and experiments have been made to obviate this difficulty. The magnesium light, the lime light, and the electric light have been employed in various ways, but without giving complete success, the main objection in each case being that the rays are, with the ordinary methods, too strongly concentrated, thus producing pictures in which the lights and shades are not only too sharply marked, but also too local, the effect of the blinding glare being also decidedly unfavourable to the expression of the unfortunate sitters called upon to face it.

We have seen a photographic portrait taken by what is known as the Van Der Weyde light. The sitting was had at midnight, a fact which by no means appears in the result. The photograph is more than up to the average standard of excellence, combining a well-defined sharpness of outline with a uniform diffusion of light and shade. The light employed is produced by a dynamo-electric machine, with the usual carbon points. The sitter is screened from the direct rays, and receives only those from a parabolic reflector. The rays are made convergent, uniform (and consequently soft and pleasant) by means of a Fresnel lens, which throws an evenly distributed beam over a sufficient space to include the subject.

It seems reasonable to believe that the new process is something more than a mere hint, and that it might be successfully applied, with suitable modifications, to all parallel branches of the art.

WATER TUBE BOILERS.

MR. ROBERT WILSON states that the following appear to be the points that require special attention in designing water tube boilers, to insure their satisfactory working and durability:

1. To keep the joints out of the fire.
2. To protect the furnace tubes from the sudden impingement of cold air upon them on opening the fire door.
3. To provide against the delivery of the cold feed direct into the furnace tubes.
4. To provide means for a proper draught circulation, in order to carry away the steam from the heating surfaces.

5. To provide passages of ample size for the upward currents of steam and water, which must not interfere with the downward currents of water.

6. To provide passages of ample size for the steam and water between the various sections of the boiler, in order to equalise the pressure and water level in all.

7. To provide ample surface for the steam to leave the water quietly.

8. To provide a sufficiently large reservoir for the steam in order to prevent the water being drawn out of its proper place by suddenly opening a steam or safety valve.

9. To provide against the flame taking a short cut to the chimney and impinging against the tubes containing steam only.

A DEAF-MUTE TELEGRAPHER.

CONSIDERING the fact that in telegraphy, as now practiced, all messages are read from sound, and that on the quickness and good training of the ear depends, to a great extent, an operator's skill, one of the most remarkable cases (in fact, the only one) on record in America or any other country was that of the late Samuel J. Hoffman. Having lost his hearing entirely a short time after learning telegraphy, he nevertheless continued the practice and successively occupied prominent positions as long as he lived. He made use of a sounder of his own construction, and received by placing his hand over it in such a manner that he could feel distinctly every vibration of the armature. He would thus continue to receive by the hour without "breaking," and experienced no difficulty except when the wire worked hard or the circuit changed frequently; he obviated this by placing his fingers on the binding screws of the relay, distinguishing the characters by the variations of the current. He died in Florida, having gained the reputation of being a most thorough operator and electrician.

WHEN pure, gallic acid forms small, feathery and nearly colourless crystals, which have a beautiful silky lustre.

TESTS FOR COPPER SOLUTIONS.—The solutions of copper possess a blue or green colour, which they retain, even when considerably diluted with water. With caustic potassa they give a light blue bulky precipitate, turning blackish brown or black on boiling the liquid. Ammonia and carbonate of ammonia produce a bluish white precipitate, soluble in excess of ammonia, yielding a rich deep blue solution. The carbonates of potassa give a similar precipitate to the last, but insoluble in excess of the precipitate. Ferrocyanide of potassium gives a reddish brown precipitate. Sulphuretted hydrogen and hydrosulphuret of ammonia give a blackish brown or a black one. A polished rod of iron, on immersion in an acidulated solution, quickly becomes coated with metallic copper.

THE WHITE INCrustation ON BRICKS.—Researches have decided the white deposit to be sulphate of magnesia, better known as Epsom salts. In the deposit, the microscope revealed the presence of epithelial scales from the human skin, and the debris of many plants. The sulphuric acid comes from the coal gas and the coal burned in the city; the base, or magnesia, is from the bricks themselves, a large quantity being found in the clay of which they are made. It is not regarded as in any way injurious, though quite unsightly and destructive to the walls. This coating may be prevented by a thick coat of paint on the wall, or the immersion of the bricks before use in a bath of sulphuric acid, and subsequently to the action of running water.

A TELEPHONE RECIPE.—Professor Barrett, in a recent lecture on the telephone, gave a recipe for making a cheap one. Take a wooden tooth-powder box and make a hole about the size of a half crown in the lid and the bottom. Take a disk of tinned iron, such as can be had from a preserved meat tin, and place it on the outside of the bottom of the box, and fix the cover on

the other side of it. Then take a small bar magnet, place on one end a small cotton or silk reel, and round the reel wind some iron wire, leaving the ends loose. Fix one end of the magnet near, as near as possible without touching, to the disk, and then one part of the telephone is complete. A similar arrangement is needed for the other end. The two are connected by the wire, and with this Professor Barrett says that he has been able to converse at a distance of about 100 yards.

ARMY CLOTHING.

THE English army has long enjoyed the reputation of being the most expensively-dressed army in Europe. The amount paid annually for the clothing of each man in the service tends to confirm this notion. The most costly uniform is that of a Staff Sergeant in the Foot Guards, to clothe whom entails upon the country a sum of £13 4s. 2d. per man per annum. Clothing for the Sergeants of this branch of the service amounts to £7 8s. 9d. each, and for the privates to £4 8s. 2d.

The Life Guards cost £8 15s. a year for each non-commissioned officer and trooper; the Royal Artillery vary from £9 4s. 1d. for a Staff Sergeant to £3 16s. 11d. for a gunner. Each Dragoon, Lancer, or Hussar costs £4 6s. 1d., and the Staff Sergeants of the Cavalry are set down at £9 14s. 1d. each. A private soldier of the Infantry of the Line figures for the moderate sum of £3 0s. 5d.; but the cheapest man to equip is the negro private of the West India Regiments, whose picturesque Zouave uniform is provided for £2 8s. per annum.

The total amount voted for clothing the Army is £1,150,587 for the current year. This includes all expenses for the Army Clothing Factory, and is liable to a deduction of £345,000 for clothing and necessities supplied to the Indian Government, the Volunteers, the Custom House, the Foreign Office, and the Admiralty, which are paid for by those Departments; but even with these deductions, the bill amounts to £805,587—not a small sum to pay for “the pomp and circumstance of glorious war.”

A WINTER GARDEN.

THE heart is a winter garden,
Mid a dreary waste of snow;
The soil must be deep and rich and warm,
Ere a single flower will blow.

Oh! what watchful care is needed
To keep the fires alight,
For the flowers are all exotic,
And the lilies are first to blight.

The light of that winter garden
Is the light that falls from above,
And the frail, sweet blossoms that open there
Are the flowers of faith and love.

L. S. H.

DISEASES OF OUR OWN CAUSING.

ON an average one-half the number of out-patients treated by a hospital surgeon suffer diseases due primarily to a want of knowledge of the laws of health and cleanliness. The ignorance of hygienic laws, which affects so disastrously the health of the rich as well as the poor, exists chiefly in regard to dress, ablution, and ventilation. This statement may at first appear startling, but an enumeration of the diseases that can be constantly traced to the above causes will show upon how sound a basis the statement rests.

The following are examples: Varicose ulcers, from dress; skin diseases, from want of cleanliness; chest diseases and fevers, from defective

ventilation. The vast number of ulcerated legs treated in the out-patient departments of hospitals, in workhouse infirmaries, and in private practice arise from varicose veins. Now, a varicose ulcer is caused by a distended condition of the veins of the leg, which have to sustain the pressure of the blood caused by gravitation.

The most frequent and flagrant cause of obstruction is the elastic garter. Children should never wear them at all, as the stockings can be perfectly well kept up by attachment of elastic straps to the waistband. If garters are worn it is important to know how to apply them with the least risk of harm; at the bend of the knee the superficial veins of the leg unite, and go deeply into the under part of the thigh, beneath the ham-string tendons. Thus a ligature below the knee obstructs all the superficial veins; but if the constriction is above, the ham-string tendons keep the pressure off the veins which return the blood from the legs. Unfortunately, most people, in ignorance of the above facts, apply the garter below the knee.

THE SANITARY CONDITION OF CORK.

AN important report from the Local Government Board was read at the Public Health Committee of the Cork Corporation, on the state of the public health of Cork, as revealed in the public inquiry held recently by Dr. McCabe. In this document it is stated that there are about 20,000 houses in Cork, of which about one-half have water-closets, and about one-fourth are without water-closets or ashpits. The main sewers which discharge into tidal waters have no ventilation shafts, although they are filled by the rising tide twice a day, and the street gullies are all trapped. Fifty-two acres, thickly populated, are liable to flooding through the sewers, as well as over the quay walls.

Dr. McCabe states that these conditions are all favourable to the development of enteric fever—unventilated main sewers, trapped gullies, tidal pressure twice a day, compressed sewer gas with no possible outlet, except through faulty drains and sink traps within the houses, and faulty traps and valves of water-closet basins. As regards overcrowding in human dwellings, it appears that there are 1,700 houses in Cork let in tenements, and in about 2,400 cases whole families occupy one single room.

Dr. McCabe, the report says, does not fail to bear testimony to the efforts made by the Corporation and the union sanitary authority to improve the condition of the city. At the same time, it becomes evident how much requires to be done before the condition of Cork can be said to be satisfactory. In conclusion, the appointment of a medical superintendent officer of health, possessing a competent knowledge of hygiene, is recommended by the Local Government Board.

LOSING FRIENDS.

NEVER cast aside your friends if by any possibility you can retain them. We are the weakest of spendthrifts if we let one friend drop off through inattention, or let one push away another, or if we hold aloof from one for petty jealousy or heedless slight or roughness. Would you throw away a diamond because it pricked you?

One good friend is not to be weighed against the jewels of all the earth. If there is coolness or unkindness between us, let us come face to face and have it out. Quick before the love grows cold! Life is too short to quarrel in, or to carry black thoughts of friends. It is easy to lose a friend, but a new one will not come for calling, nor make up for the old one when he comes.

WHEN ill reports are spread of you, live so as that nobody may believe them.

THE LOVE PACT.

CHAPTER XLII.

Alas! for that unhappy time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From me and from our misty clime,
Where weeps the silver willow. E. A. Fox.

So intense was the indignation which flamed in Hugh Mostyn's breast at the cruel taunts which Kesterton had hurled at him ere he quitted the room that all Earl Thanet's and Robert Wilmer's persuasion and calmer reasoning was required to keep the infuriated young man from following the unmasked schemer and endeavouring, notwithstanding his own weakness, to inflict condign punishment upon the villain.

But he yielded at last to the united remonstrances of his father and his friend and consented to adjourn his just vengeance for the time.

Hugh registered notwithstanding a mental vow that Kesterton should leave the manor on the morrow, and that he would follow closely on the trail of his unworthy kinsman with some frail hope that he might thus be led to Eugénie's refuge.

Yet everything connected with the abduction of his beloved was involved in inextricable mystery.

He had heard Robert Wilmer's description of the old and distinguished stranger who had visited Sunecross—he had been shown the lost card-case.

That the initials and coronet indicated its ownership by the Marquis D'Aubion the young soldier did not doubt, the more so that the description of the visitor tallied remarkably with the old noble's appearance.

What then, Hugh asked himself with a puzzled mind, could be the connection between one of the haughtiest of French noblesse and the Norman peasant?

Then, he queried, was there any organised plot between the marquis and Rupert Kesterton to wrong this poor, unfriended girl?

No. He dismissed the latter suspicion quickly.

The Marquis D'Aubion was too high-minded a gentleman to enter into such vile schemes as might be appropriate to a villain and a murderer.

For Hugh knew now that his kinsman's hands were red with human blood.

In order to put the young soldier thoroughly upon his guard, Wilmer had told him of that scene on the roof of the burning Dower House, when James Meers was done to death by the calculating schemer.

While Captain Mostyn sat silent in the chair to which his physical weakness forced him to totter, after the first violence of his anger had subsided, Wilmer, mindful that the sire and son had not yet been in uninterrupted communion since Hugh's rescue, slipped judiciously and quietly out of the apartment.

The moment was a propitious one, for the heart of the old man was very tender with a yearning love for the son who sat before him, pale, trembling, attenuated—yielded up to him as it were a second time from the grave.

His eyes were dwelling fondly on that sad, pallid face when Hugh raised his own with a wistful look and met his father's gaze.

“Heaven has been very good to us, my boy,” said Lord Thanet, tremulously, choking down a strange rising in the throat, and aware also of an unusual mistiness over his clear grey eyes. “I held to my faith in it through all those weary days, and this hour repays me for all my agony.”

“I too am grateful to the Power who has preserved me alike from the perils of the darksome mine and the machinations of human villainy. I too feel that to see your dear, kindly face once more, father, compensates for all sufferings. Yet I cannot rejoice as you do. Shall I tell you why?”

The earl read the drift of the query and shrank from the subject which he yet knew must be met.

"Because you are weak and stricken with the sadness which such weakness brings in its train, Hugh. But rest and our careful tending will soon win you from this."

"Rest!" responded Hugh, gloomily. "There is at present no rest for me—perhaps in the world no happiness for me. For rest—I leave the matter to-morrow."

"In your state! Are you mad, Hugh?"

"No. My pulses beat as equably as your own, if with a feebler throb. But, live or die, I have a sacred quest to undertake, and I will not tarry on my mission."

"Hugh, for my sake be reasonable. Whom have I lost you, my son, to love?"

The old man rose, and, leaning over his son's chair, took his shrunken hand with a tender clasp.

"Father, for your sake I have borne—I will bear—very much. For your sake, or—may I say it?—for the sake of your inexorable pride, I consent to crush for ever the one bright hope of my life! For your sake too—if there be no hope of freedom—I shall wed an unloved bride and sacrifice another heart besides my own to that fiend, that unhallowed pact which is the bane of two lives—the blight which falls alike on the houses of Mostyn and D'Aubion. But one thing I cannot do—even for you, my father: I cannot relinquish to the cruel hands of a villain the woman to whom my heart has been given—the trusting girl who but for her belief in my honour—the unsullied honour of an English gentleman—a scion of Mostyn—would this day have been safe and happy in her own quiet home. No. I will seek her, if need be, to the very world's ends—I will rescue her if, with my hand upon his throat, I crush the life out of that snake who disgraces his lineage and his native land."

A wave of strong emotion swept over Lord Thanet's face.

Evidently the appeal of his son moved the old man more deeply than had any previous one of a similar character.

The reason was not far to seek. The old peer's family pride—his intense desire to hold to the pact he had made with the Marquis D'Aubion—and indeed every consideration which swayed him—were powerless against paternal love—could not resist the pleading of the pale face, the attenuated form of the son to whom his heart clung.

"Hugh," he said, tremulously, "you are very hard upon me. I know that you will do me the simple justice to acknowledge that I have ever been a kind father to you. In these my declining years my sole thought has been to secure your prosperity—my only hope to see you happy—and maybe to see also a sturdy race grow up around my knees who should bear down the name of Mostyn in the days when I had passed from earth. My mind has been doubtless strongly bent on the fulfilment of that promise, made when my heart was young and hopeful, to the man whom I rescued and who, in turn, saved my life. Nor can I deny that I am loth to see the blood of our ancient lineage mixed with aught that derives its origin from plebeian sources. But, my dear boy, all this is nothing to your happiness. If need be I will surrender all my—my prejudices if you will; I will even break—though 'twill be the first time a Mostyn has ever done so—my plighted word; I will make every sacrifice for your peace and your welfare, Hugh."

The young man gazed at his father's saddened face with a look of infinite sympathy. He knew—none better—how great was the sacrifice that proud soul thus proffered.

The sacrifice was indeed too great—Hugh's own spirit too proud to permit of its acceptance.

He turned his pale face upward to that of the earl and wrung his father's hand convulsively.

"I thank you, father, with thanks which words are all too feeble to convey; but I in my turn must show I can be generous as becomes a Mostyn. I do not ask now that you should break the compact. Let us leave that matter to the free decision of Mademoiselle D'Aubion.

Allow me frankly to acquaint her with the fact, and, if she release me not, I will espouse her and cherish her future life with kindness if love be wanting. For Eugénie I may say this: Her pride—plebeian pride if you will—is also far too great to allow her to creep unwelcomed into our stately halls. Till the time comes—if it ever come—when you can press her brow with a true father's kiss she and I can be no more to each other than we are to-day—heart-united in the great chancery of Heaven."

A look of relief passed over Lord Thanet's face.

"We understand each other then, Hugh. Now I will go and give Kesterton a cool congé, for we must shut our eyes to his attempt upon your life in order to preserve the family honour. He may remain here for this night only, but to-morrow he must take his departure."

Hugh inclined his head in token of assent, and the earl left the room.

Meanwhile Robert Wilmer, on leaving the father and son together to their interview, had proceeded to discover if possible either Lady Adeline Vavassour or Rupert Kesterton.

To either he had momentous words to say, and with his plain Saxon bluntness the young Yorkshireman was determined to lose no time in giving them utterance.

He failed in finding the man he hated, but was successful in the more pleasant quest for the woman whom he loved.

Loved! Yes, the plain, blunt man of the people had lost his heart to the fair patrician.

What good could come of such hope?

Ah, that was the question he asked himself a thousand times a day, and always without result. He well knew how frail were any hopes, yet he cherished them.

Had not Hugh Mostyn loved one below him in social rank? and might it not be that Adeline Vavassour could do the same? At the worst she was no cold, cruel "Clara Vere de Vere," and if rejected he would not at least be scorned. For the rest the manly young artisan was much of the same mind as the Cavalier poet when he sang:

He either fears his fate too much,
Or his desires are small,
Who will not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all.

Passing along the statue-bordered, glazed corridor which led to the conservatory, Robert Wilmer perceived her of whom he was in search.

He stood still to admire for a moment the exquisite coup-d'œil which the scene presented.

Against the dark background of feathery foliage of fern Lady Adeline's graceful form, clad in a costume of delicate violet, stood out in a relief which increased her exceeding loveliness.

She was bending down in close examination of some choice primulas, and looked up with a little start as Robert entered.

A rosy blush flitted over the girl's face as she said, earnestly:

"Oh, Mr. Wilmer, I am glad to see you. I was very anxious to learn the result of that strange meeting—of those terrible words."

"I can scarcely tell you, Lady Adeline. I simply know that Mr. Rupert Kesterton leaves Mostyn Manor never to return. I know too that he and Captain Mostyn must not be allowed to meet each other."

"Can there be any grounds for Captain Mostyn's charges?"

"They are true."

"It is very dreadful," said Lady Adeline, paling visibly. "I had hoped they were but the fancies of an overwrought mind. What will be the end?"

"It is not possible to say. If the captain remained at Mostyn the hatred—for such it now is—between the two men would be of but little moment. But I am well assured that he is bound on a perilous mission. He will never rest until he has rescued my sister Eugénie. I know not whether she has been spirited away by Mr. Rupert Kesterton or by others; but if that man

of evil heart is the transgressor what may happen when he encounters Captain Mostyn in hot pursuit who can say?"

Lady Adeline sighed.

"Surely this must not be. Lord Thanet will not permit his son to run into such peril. And yet—that girl, whose lovely, frightened face—like the sweet features of a startled wood-nymph—haunts me often, must not be left in danger. How strange is the irony of fate!" she went on, half to herself. "Captain Mostyn is honoured, loved, possessed of all worldly gifts—save happiness."

Then aloud to her companion she continued:

"Mr. Wilmer, you and I once saved Captain Mostyn from very death. I would I could aid in averting from him the peril which may be imminent; but I am a feeble girl, and it cannot be. For you—"

"For me, Lady Adeline," responded Wilmer, completing the sentence as the girl paused, "for me, my side shall be by his side."

"It is nobly resolved," said the girl, "what I should have expected from you."

"Your good opinion is very grateful to me," replied the young man, with a deep inclination of the head. "In my turn owe a life to Captain Mostyn and I am not likely to forget the debt. Added to this, I must rescue my sister, or if need be avenge her. I am well assured that with or without Lord Thanet's sanction Captain Mostyn will follow on the track of his unworthy kinsman; and we will depart together. We shall take your good wishes for our success, Lady Adeline?"

"The sincerest" was the response; "but"—with a strange tremor in the tone—"you will be cautious."

A happy look came into the young man's face.

"With the truest caution—that which lies in courage," he replied, "and your wishes for our safety will be the good angels which will hover over us and guide and guard us."

As he spoke Wilmer fixed his eyes with a strange, passionate look on the girl's lovely face, to which the ardent gaze called up a rosy suffusion.

She made no reply to the last words, but her fingers picked away the primula blossoms which she held petal by petal with a nerveless fluttering.

"I am about to do a strange thing, Lady Adeline," the young man resumed, in an agitated voice—"to break the conventionalities of society in such manner as is only possible for a poor, ignorant toiler like myself to do. Nor can I clothe the thoughts of my heart in words that would buffet them; but I would dare only to ask you this: If some shepherd youth—some astronomer on the Chaldean plains when earth was yet young—had singled out one 'bright, particular star' from the host of heaven—had gazed upon it so long and fervently that all his hopes, his aspirations centred in the luminous glory so far above him—so inaccessible to his wildest wishes—would you counsel such a one to pray to the bright dream that it should vouchsafe a beam of recognition upon him—that its spherulic music should whisper to him in the night watches 'Hope!'"

The girl's face had gradually become averted, but the deep blush which mantled cheek and brow showed that she well understood the apologetic in which Robert Wilmer had humbly masked an avowal of love.

But one of the little blossoms remained undestroyed. By a sudden movement Adeline held it out to Robert.

As she did so a single word fell from her lips—so softly whispered as to be inaudible to any ears save those of love. That word was "Hope!"

Then, as the enraptured young man bent on one knee and, taking the flower from her hand, pressed it with a fervent kiss, the high-born Adeline Vavassour—transformed for the moment into a timid, bashful girl—glided hastily from the conservatory.

CHAPTER XLIII.

"The day to night," she made her moan,
 "The day to night, the night to morn,
 And day and night I am left alone
 To live forgotten and love forlorn."

TENNYSON.

WHEN Eugénie recovered her senses she found herself lying on a coarse pallet bed in total darkness.

For some minutes she was unable to collect her thoughts sufficiently to realise where she was, for an instinctive feeling assured her that the place was a strange one.

Then as memory returned the events of the past day recurred, ending with the terrible intelligence which had been conveyed by the newspaper.

All things else—her own peril, anxiety as to the motives of her captors, fears for the future—were swallowed up in one great sorrow.

Dead! Hugh Mostyn dead! He, so full of life and strength, stricken down on the instant, scorched by the fiery blast or crushed out of human form by the fierce convulsion of the shaken earth.

The thought was agony, and again and again it seemed to Eugénie that the torture of it would force its way from her lips in long-drawn, piercing, hopeless shrieks which it needed all her self-control to restrain.

Dead! Had it been anything but that! She knew that they could never have been more to each other than friends.

She could have borne the knowledge that Hugh had wedded another. In thoughts of his happiness she could have lived down her own grief. But now no memory could remain to her but that of his awful fate.

How Eugénie passed through that night of wild agony she never dared to recall. Towards morning exhaustion succeeded and brought brief and troubled sleep.

When the girl awoke the dull February daylight was creeping through a rude little window, or bull's-eye, formed of a single circular piece of thick glass and showed her the appearance of her prison.

It was a very little low room, evidently situated in the mill itself, as the sound of the machinery was clearly audible.

Save a small pallet bed, and a rude table, the chamber contained no furniture. Eugénie's travelling trunk however was standing in one corner.

The captive girl took in the surroundings with sad, languid eyes. Jacques Cochart had indeed adopted the most sure method of rendering her tractable.

In her present mood it seemed to Eugénie that it mattered little where she was, whether a prisoner or free.

She was sitting on the bedside in an attitude of hopeless dejection when the strong heavy door was unlocked from the exterior, and as the girl turned her swollen, tear-filled eyes that way it moved on its rude hinges and gave entrance to the woman whom she had seen on the previous night.

Madame Corbeau carried a ewer of water and a coarse towel, and, closing the door after her, placed these articles on the table, telling Eugénie that she would wait while she performed her toilet.

The girl's hasty ablutions made, the old woman removed the basin and towel and presently reappeared with some hot coffee and a plate of bread and butter.

Eugénie drank a small quantity of the coffee but rejected the food.

The old woman watched her with an expression of curiosity on her ungainly visage.

The apathetic quietude of her captive evidently surprised her.

She had come prepared for angry denunciations, for curious questioning or for pitiful pleading, and this silent, uncomplaining calm appeared incredible.

The only probable solution that occurred to the miller's wife was that Eugénie was cherishing hopes of escape.

Cochart had not vouchsafed to tell the partners in his villany what the news was which had prostrated the girl on the previous night or the woman might have come to a conclusion nearer to the truth.

The day sped on, and each passing hour saw the captive still seated in that same posture of lethargy.

Her eyes were dry and hot—the fountain of tears seemed exhausted, and their blessed relief came no more to soothe the tortured brain.

The old woman brought food at intervals, but the girl tasted nothing.

Night came and she sought the rude couch mechanically—but not to sleep.

The next day saw the girl a victim to the same awful apathy—again she spoke no word—again, save for an occasional cup of coffee, she took no sustenance.

At night she extended herself on the pallet, but no repose came.

On the next morning Madame Corbeau marked the girl's appearance with some concern.

Eugénie's dry eyes held a strangely wild look, her passionless face was mantled with a peculiar flush, both of which increased as the day wore on.

And the girl still remained speechless, still refused food.

That their captive should either die of inanition or become insane by no means entered into the views of Marcel and his wife. They wished to make capital out of her, and to that end it was essential that her life should be preserved.

Hence, had not Eugénie's preceptions been blunted by her mental prostration she would have detected a peculiar flavour in the cup of coffee which the old woman almost forced on her as evening fell.

Left to herself again, Eugénie became aware of a sense of overpowering languor. Again she lay listlessly down on her wretched bed.

But she had not reclined there many minutes before a leaden weight seemed to press down her hot eyelids with irresistible power until, perforce, they closed over the burning orbs.

The dull, drear sensation of loss and woe and utter desolation faded into the blackness of a merciful oblivion, and at last Eugénie slept.

The coffee had been drugged with opium.

But, however the slumber had been induced, it was beneficent, as sleep, the healer, is wont to be—perhaps the more soothing that this repose was not altogether that of utter forgetfulness.

No. As morning dawned, and through the thick green glass circled the faint sunbeams fell on that poor, thin, worn countenance, its hard tension had relaxed to softness, its compressed lips had parted in a happy smile.

For in the morning hours bright visions had hovered over the captive's pillow; loved and familiar faces had floated cherub-like before her mental gaze: the old aunt—Mrs. Wilmer—Robert—even the quaint, affectionate face of little Fidéle—then, strange to say, the mysterious yet kindly spoken visitor to the old Norman churchyard—and, lastly, and best of all, the loved features of Hugh Mostyn, happy and hopeful.

When Eugénie awoke at last from the felicity of her dreamful sleep to the blankness and bleakness of her dungeon chamber it was mid-day.

She arose a new woman, refreshed—instinct again with the hopes and the glorious vitality of youth.

This time she ate heartily of a rude yet somewhat tempting repast which the old woman had purveyed with officious assiduity.

She even condescended to exchange some few sentences with her jailer and inquired how long a space had passed since she had been brought thither.

When Madame Corbeau had withdrawn the girl again sat down to meditate, but this time her thoughts were rational and comparatively calm.

Her dreams had impressed Eugénie with an irresistible conviction that life yet held happiness in store for her.

By way of still farther calming her mind she

resolved before continuing her cogitations on her present situation or her lover's fate to seek the highest of all consolations.

She made her simple orisons to Heaven for aid, then unlocked the traveling trunk and took therefrom two books. One was a religious manual, the other a small copy of the Scriptures in French.

Some passages in the latter directed her thoughts in a new channel, and she turned and took from the box, this time with trembling hands, another volume.

It was a book which Robert Wilmer had given her containing interesting anecdotes of miners and mining life.

As she let the back of the volume rest upon the rude table she allowed the covers to fall back so that the book opened by chance.

It was an innocent attempt at divination, and it brought her fresh comfort, for the pages thus revealed told of many, very many instances of men who, after long and dreary captivity in the bowels of the earth, had been at last restored to life and light.

With a thankful heart the girl accepted this as an answer to her prayers and a happy omen, and the strong rebound from her previous overwhelming misery was so great that hope now reigned triumphant.

However true the account of the explosion might be, Eugénie felt now assured that Hugh Mostyn lived.

After a short indulgence in this delicious dream her thoughts turned upon her own position.

What the motives of her abductor had been she could not conceive and speedily relinquished unsatisfactory conjectures on this point to calculate her chances of rescue.

Could she hope to compass her own freedom?

The probability of this she felt was very slight—the more so that a casual inspection showed that during her swoon or slumber she had been deprived of everything valuable which she possessed—the small store of money, a little gold watch, ear-rings and trinkets, some love gifts of value, and, worst of all, her priceless engagement ring—Hugh Mostyn's present.

Whether these had been taken from her by Jacques Cochart or by the Corbeaus she did not know—probably by the former, in order that Eugénie should not bribe the miller or his wife therewith.

Her only hope of aid then lay in England. When the Wilmers found that her promised letter did not come she felt assured that Robert—and Hugh if living—would suspect something was wrong and would not let any extended interval elapse before making inquiry.

Several days had passed since she left Sun-cross and already some steps might have been taken.

The next morning she attempted to draw the miller's wife into conversation, but could elicit nothing from her.

Later on, as she was seeking consolation in the pages of her Bible she became aware of a fierce altercation in some distant part of the building conducted by masculine voices.

Not long after a man's step sounded without.

The door was opened cautiously and the macabre form and hideous face of Cochart entered the room.

The startled girl looked at the intruder with a mingled expression of contempt and terror. Alone with this horrible caricature of humanity she might indeed well feel fear—that of an innocent dove into whose cage a black and venomous reptile had crept.

"Well, my little darling," began the notary, in his harsh, croaking voice, "and how do we find ourselves now?—dull, I dare say. Glad to have a visitor to cheer us up, eh?"

"Monsieur," replied Eugénie, calmly, "I can have little pleasure in seeing one who has behaved towards me with such perfidious cruelty, unless indeed, as I hope and trust, you have come to release me—to restore me to my friends."



[HOPE.]

The grinning leer which came on the notary's parchment face at these words was perfectly diabolical.

"No, no, my dear. I don't intend to open the doors—he! he! I am your friend—such a one as you never had before!"

Eugénie regarded him with a look of cold contempt.

"I am not so lacking in friends as you insinuate, monsieur, and, as I told you once before, when they discover my prison they will not fail to render you amenable to the law for this outrage."

"The law!—oh, yes! Be quite at ease on that point, my sweetest. I understand a little of the law myself. Besides, there is no law to part husband and wife."

"Husband and wife!"

"Yes. That wasn't exactly the purpose for which I captured my little bird—and indeed she may be yet useful otherwise. But really it is such a pretty bird that it would be a pity it should lack a mate. Très bien, I'll be the mate. I am about to prepare a snug little nest and a handsome. When it is ready I will take my bird away from this cage and bear it away to that nest, and—"

"Cease this insolent badinage, monsieur!" interrupted Eugénie, her proud spirit fairly roused. "The very words are contamination!"

"Ta! ta! ta! You are shy at first, my beauty, like other birds, but you'll have to coo mildly as a dove before I've done with you. You'll have to prove a very obedient partner, or—"

"Cease this hideous jest, monsieur."

"It is no jest. When I first captured you I did it for reasons into which we need not now enter, but since then I have learned to love you."

The girl turned her face from the old man's gloating visage with an expression of abhorrence.

"Yes, and you must learn to love me. I can be very kind to pretty birds; and when I have you safe in the little nest I am preparing you can be very happy."

"You are mad!" cried the girl, angrily. "Do you not suppose I would denounce your villany at the very altar's foot?"

"Be calm, my dear. I would not give you the opportunity. I am not particular and can dispense with the services of the man in black. Bah! you are far too nice. Let me give you a lesson."

Suddenly the old man sprang to his feet, and before the startled girl could evade him he had clasped her in his long arms.

Circled in that rigid embrace she was powerless, despite her frantic struggles. With a horrible loathing the girl felt those dry, skinny lips pressed to her face—the small hands which she raised in protection drawn away by main force.

The terrible ordeal well nigh maddened Eugénie, and her frantic shrieks rang through the room, although they seemed to produce no effect upon Cochart.

But while the girl was vainly struggling to escape the pollution of the old man's embrace a strange and terrible voice exclaimed, in their very ears:

"Soûlérat! forbear!"

So hollow, so unearthly were the accents that Cochart released Eugénie and looked around in vague alarm.

"Who spoke?" he queried.

"Begone, villain!"

The voice appeared to be in the room itself, yet no visible speaker stood there.

"Insolent scoundrel!" cried Cochart, angrily. "Who and what are you? What does this mean, Marcel?"

And he rushed from the room, securing the door after him nevertheless.

He had scarcely done so when Eugénie heard a whisper in a man's voice:

"Don't be alarmed, mademoiselle. I wish you well and have something to say. Come here."

With some difficulty the girl traced the source of the sounds. They came from a minute crevice in the rude boarding of the side of the room.

Thankful for any aid, however feeble, Eugénie approached the partition.

"I am Nicholas Corbeau. I have pity for you and will help you if I can. I will do this for your own sake because you are gentle and have a pretty face. But I would do myself good also. You spoke of gold the other night."

"Yes," responded Eugénie, falteringly. "If you aid me I have friends who will reward you."

"It is good. The skinny old fiend to whom my father has sold himself gives him gold, but naught to me. Worse—he called me evil names to-day—the parched-up anatomy. Tonnerre! I could twist him round my fingers. He struck me too. If it had not been for the father I would have smashed him!"

"Can you—will you help me?" whispered Eugénie, earnestly.

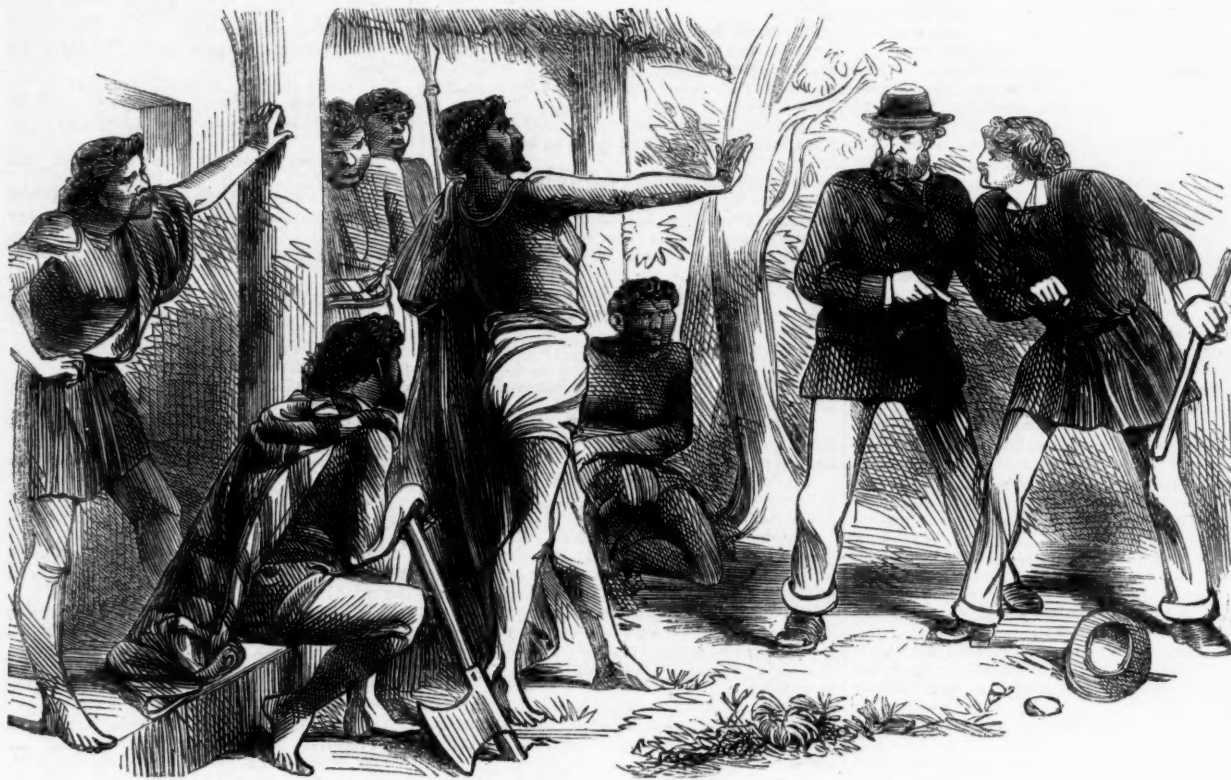
"I'll try—especially if you can help me—with some gold I mean. I'm in love with Margot—Margot, the huntsman's daughter you know. But there's no chance in that quarter for a man who lives at the Moulin d'Or. If I had but a few louis-d'or I could gain a livelihood like an honest man, and Margot—All the same I'll help you whether you have the power to help me in return or not. As for the skeleton there—bien, I've a reckoning to settle with him by-and-bye. Be of good heart and keep all this dark when you speak to my mother. Good-bye for the present."

Eugénie heard a muffled footfall descend from the partition. It was evidently that of the young giant in his stocking feet.

Somehow the proffered sympathy and assistance even of the ruffian gave her strength and spirit. Surely ere long other help would come.

Jacques Cochart troubled his captive with no further visits that day. Indeed Eugénie had reason to suppose that, after another angry altercation with Marcel or his son, the notary had quitted the Moulin d'Or.

(To be Continued.)



[INTRUDERS.]

THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER XVIII.

See, in the sun how they glisten and glance,
Mingle and meet in a maniac dance.

THE blacks, or aborigines, of New South Wales, like the savage natives of every country, have been found amenable to kindness upon the part of the usurper of their hunting-grounds. But, although the English governmental policy toward the natives has been for the most part founded upon consideration toward its involuntary "wards" in the antipodes, private settlers here as elsewhere, have been cruel and unjust to the original owners of the soil, frequently arousing their worst passions, and waging upon them a war of extermination.

Mackenzie, of whom Dr. Marsh had bought his farm, had been one of these settlers.

He had "squatted" upon his domain some years before, licensing from the government an extensive "sheep run," and had settled down as lord of the soil.

The natives whom he coolly dispossessed were driven to encroach upon the lands of another tribe, who made war upon them, repulsing them with loss.

They retired to their original but narrowed territory, and Mackenzie, desiring to drive them away completely, killed their kangaroos and opossums. Driven by hunger, they retaliated by killing and eating his sheep.

Mackenzie then proposed a treaty of peace, and invited the tribe to feast at his hut and make terms with him.

Some forty warriors came, leaving their spears

and waddies behind them, in proof of amity. Mackenzie entertained them handsomely, and feasted them upon a pudding of maize, in which a liberal supply of poison had been introduced.

Thirty-seven of the warriors died at their camp that night in horrible torment, and the survivors, with the remainder of the tribe, vowed fearful vengeance upon their ruthless and treacherous foe.

From that time forward they had worked him all the annoyance in their power. They had burned his huts, killed his stock, run off his horses, killed one of his convict-shepherds, and would have killed him also, only he never went unarmed, and they had a lively awe of his rifle and revolver.

His English inheritance had been most timely, for his life had become a constant warfare, and even his dogged and nearly indomitable spirit was beginning to quail at the prospect of perpetual strife.

He had not dared to bring out his family to Australia, lest its members should fall victims to the just vengeance of his enemies.

In selling Garra-Garra, therefore, as his farm was called, he had thrown into the bargain the justly incurred hatred of the surrounding natives.

The good old doctor had had no misgivings in regard to the blacks.

He knew that when the settlers treated the aborigines with kindness and humanity, the poor creatures were invariably found to be trustworthy and even affectionate servants.

The men and boys prove excellent shepherds and stockmen, and no kind master is ever found to regret his trust in them.

The "black fellows" who swarmed out of the hut as the doctor and Chandos ascended the veranda, were all large and athletic of frame, well shaped, and nearly naked, armed with spears and waddies—a kind of club with which they do great execution at close or remote quarters, hurling it with marvellous precision at a distance of several rods.

They were ferocious of aspect, with close-trimmed beards and bristling hair, wild and savage in their fury, and apparently bent upon violence.

The doctor and Chandos recoiled before them, their hands flying to their belts.

The leader of the troop was named Wymeric, and was a powerful fellow—a chief held in great awe by neighbouring tribes as well as by his own.

He advanced a little beyond his followers, and then stopped short with an expression of amazement.

He had been lying in wait for Mackenzie, and was taken aback at seeing strangers in his enemy's stead.

"Where is Mackenzie?" he asked in English, peering beyond the new-comers with a keen and suspicious glance.

"He is gone," said Dr. Marsh—"gone to England. He will never come back."

An expression of baffled fury appeared upon the face of the black fellow.

"Gone!" he repeated. "And we have not paid him our death. This is bad—bad!"

His followers groaned assent.

"Who are you?" demanded Wymeric, apparently quite willing to transfer his enmity to the new-comers. "What do you do here?"

"I am the new owner of Garra-Garra," said Dr. Marsh, kindly, yet not relaxing his grip upon his revolver. "I am come here to live with my friend. We desire to live at peace with you. Let us be friends."

The chief looked sullen and suspicious, and did not answer.

"We wish to raise sheep and cultivate the soil," continued the doctor. "We will treat you with kindness. Let us make a treaty—"

The chief grasped his spear.

"We made a treaty with Mackenzie," he said, bitterly, "and he fed us with poisoned food, and thirty-seven of the best and bravest of our warriors died. We want no more treaties."

"We will not make any treaty like that," cried the doctor, horror-stricken. "We are

honest all the way through. We will keep our word. If you will be fair and good to us, we will be fair and good to you. You are many in number, we are but two. Yet, if you harm us, our government will hunt you down with guns and destroy you. If you treat us as friends, we will be your friends. Why should we not be at peace?"

The doctor was elderly and grey-haired. He had a benignant, kindly face, which even these savages could read aright.

They could see that no treachery lurked behind his cool, grey eyes. They looked from him to Chandos.

The noble countenance of the latter could harbour no treachery. The steel-blue eyes were true as heaven.

They began to waver, and the chief exchanged a few words apart with the more prominent among his followers.

The substance of his discourse was whether a treaty with the new-comers would not be more profitable than warfare.

Wymerie was just enough to consider that these white men had never harmed him, yet he considered brutality and treachery the chief characteristics of the whites, judging by his own experience, and he was in doubt if these should not be put to death upon general principles.

"They look honest," he muttered; "but who knows that they will not turn out like Mackenzie?"

The doctor saw that he had gained an advantage, and he followed it up.

"I have come without shepherds and stockmen," he said, "I and my friend, and we thought to hire both among you. We will pay you liberally."

The blacks began to look more kindly upon the Englishmen.

"You can try us," said Chandos, with that winning smile which people who had once seen never forgot, but which had long been a stranger to his stern lips, and the magnetism of which charmed even these poor savages—"you can try us, you know, and if we prove false to our word you can then kill us."

This proposition seemed to strike Wymerie and his followers as exceedingly fair.

They again debated among themselves. The prospect of gain, the honest appearance of these strangers, and the hint at the vengeance of the government in case of harm to them, besides the incontrovertible fact, which they, in their savage love of justice, were not likely to forget, that these men had never injured them, all helped to make up a strong argument in favour of friendliness.

Wymerie, speaking English more fluently than his followers, presented their views.

"If we make a treaty of peace," he said, "we shall want gifts."

"Very well," said the doctor, "we will give gifts."

The blacks held another consultation among themselves, and Wymerie announced with dignity that they would make the desired treaty of peace.

"We will have a feast," said the doctor, knowing that the breaking of bread, together with the sharing of salt, is held by savage tribes everywhere as a proof of good faith, and as cementing the bond. "We are hungry, and it is almost night. Let us kindle a fire and make merry."

Some of the blacks helped to gather wood for a fire out of doors, despising the conveniences of the small house-kitchen. Cooking utensils were brought out.

The doctor had among his stores several crops of live fowls, but these had been brought for breeding purposes, and were not to be touched.

Mackenzie had left behind him a large stock of fowls, and requisition was made upon them, but the doctor saw no way of supplying the wants of so many visitors.

Wymerie solved the difficulty by presenting several kangaroos and opossums, which had been slain by his warriors that day.

One of the blacks, who had been the ser-

vant of a settler, offered his services as assistant cook.

The doctor had a plentiful store of flour, hominy, rice, and staple foods. He put a huge kettle of rice over the fire to boil, put a bushel of potatoes in the ashes to bake, and kept a watchful eye upon his guests.

Chandos assisted the native cook, who appeared to have a natural gift in the culinary line.

The flesh of the kangaroo is not only very palatable, but highly nutritious. The most valuable portions of the animal are the hind-quarters, and Walla, the cook, cut off the dark-coloured steaks with a dexterity that did him credit.

These were to be broiled on coals. Several "saddles" were put to roast, and were kept turning before the blaze.

The opossums were prepared and placed on the extensive fire, and a score of rabbits—of which Mackenzie had possessed hundreds—were also put to roast.

While the cooking went on, the warriors walked about amicably, and Wymerie resumed his negotiations with Dr. Marsh.

The treaty progressed favourably, but slowly, with unavoidable hitches. Wymerie demanded fire-arms.

The doctor refused to yield to this demand, alleging that he had no more than he needed. The chief lowered his tone, and called for salt, sugar, beads, hatchets, and looking-glasses.

The doctor brought from his waggon a huge box which he had filled for such an occasion as this. Salt and sugar were both yielded in what Wymerie evidently considered as prodigal generosity.

Gay-coloured beads, small hatchets, and tiny, cheap looking-glasses—mere scraps of mirrors—were also distributed, and the blacks strutted about in high feather.

Wymerie next called for whiskey, but the doctor had none for him, and mitigated his refusal by the bestowal of a bright saucepan and a red blanket.

By this time universal jollity reigned. Spears and waddies were laid aside as useless and cumbersome.

The rice swelled in the huge pot, to the great wonder of the visitors, who crowded around it and muttered among themselves. The meat began to give forth a savoury odour, and the feast was nearly ready.

By this time the night was falling. The hills were seen only as a distant haze. The stars and the young moon shed a bright glow upon the plain.

The camp-fire flared red in the dusk, and the grotesque figures moving about in its glare made the spectacle seem as strange as a tale out of the Arabian nights.

The doctor brought out his final gift to his guests—two score of tin plates, bright as silver, which fitted together so closely as to take up an exceedingly small space.

Taking off his coat to his work, and ably assisted by Chandos, he carved his meat, and helped his guests with a liberal hand, heaping each plate with broiled and roasted kangaroo, opossum, fowl, rabbit, rice, and baked potato. These were passed, first to the chief, then to his followers. The blacks waited with unexpected politeness, not touching their small mountains of food.

"Why do you not eat?" asked the doctor. "Are you not pleased?"

"You eat first," said Wymerie, significantly. "If you not die, then we eat."

The doctor and Chandos helped themselves to a liberal supply. Both were hungry, and the odour of the meat was appetising. They began to eat with relish.

Wymerie, ashamed of his suspicions, consumed the contents of his dish ravenously. His followers did the same, and helped themselves at the source of supply again and again. Good humour and jollity reigned.

By the time that all were fed to repletion the blacks were on the best possible terms with the whites.

"It is settled now that we are friends?" said the doctor, addressing Wymerie.

The chief nodded gravely. "Friends so long as you treat us friendly," he declared.

"You will not kill our sheep or cattle?" "Not if you will keep out of our hunting-grounds, and let alone our kangaroos and opossums."

"Must we shoot no game?" asked the doctor.

"On your own land, yes. You can keep your farm and your sheep-run. You may even go to the Wallaby hills, but we will draw our line, and you must not cross it to hunt anything."

"That is agreed. You will not injure our property?"

"Not so long as you keep faith with us."

"We need shepherds and stockmen. Can you supply us with trustworthy men?"

The chief called out of his ranks a half-dozen stalwart black fellows.

"These speak English and have served the settlers," he declared. "They are good shepherds and stockmen. You can speak to them."

The doctor did so. They were simple and straightforward, and he speedily made a bargain with them.

Walla had served as cook to a party of men-settlers, and the doctor engaged him to serve in the same capacity.

A long-limbed, lithe, thin-featured black was then engaged as hunter to the establishment, and bound himself, in consideration of good pay, to keep the new settlers supplied with game, without encroaching upon the preserves of his tribe.

The bargain concluded, the treaty made, the gifts received, the interview was at an end.

The blacks took their leave and departed, leaving behind them the eight newly-engaged servants of the new-comers.

The doctor detailed the six stockmen and shepherds to look after the sheep, and to drive them to the farm next day, or as soon as might be, for counting and branding. There were huts upon the sheep-run, and the six men departed upon their duty.

"Now let us enter our new home, my boy," said Dr. Marsh. "We have not even seen the interior. I hope we shall find it comfortable."

They entered at the broken door, Walla following them. The hunter moved away, seeking shelter in an outbuilding.

The hut was low and simply built. The veranda was its finest feature. The interior consisted of two rooms, both supplied with glass windows, but unplastered. The log walls were whitewashed.

There was a huge chimney between the two rooms, and on each side of it was a cavernous fireplace.

The rear apartment was small, with a dirt floor, and possessed a table, cupboard, and chairs, with pot-hook and hangers, pots and kettles, in the chimney-place.

The front room was larger, with a floor of planks, with table, chairs, and cupboard, and with two wooden bunks enclosed in a recess of the wall, and intended for sleeping purposes.

"Not bad accommodation," said Chandos, regarding the hut with the eye of a settler, by the light of the wood-fire Walla kindled on the hearth. "There are lockers under these bunks for bedding. The blacks seem to have done no harm here beyond breaking in the door. The cupboards have locks and keys, and will hold a month's supplies. Here is a trap-door."

He raised it, and discovered a hole under the hut which was intended as a cellar.

"It will be well to bring in our stores," said the doctor. "Walla, you can help us."

The boxes, barrels, and bales that filled the waggon to overflowing, were brought into the hut and deposited in the cellar and cupboards.

The doctor bestowed a blanket upon Walla,

and gave one to Chandos and took one himself. He dismissed his cook, and the adventurers were left to themselves.

"A good night's work!" said the doctor, smiling. "I begin to think that I have missed my vocation all my life, my dear boy. I was intended by nature for an Australian sheep-farmer. I flatter myself I played the diplomat to-night quite creditably."

He examined the bunks with a critical eye, adjusting a pair of spectacles upon his nose to assist his close inspection.

"Humph!" he said. "Mackenzie had decidedly simple tastes. These mattresses are filled with husks of the maize. Lucky, I brought so many blankets."

He produced half a dozen and used three of them to make a soft bed for himself.

"I fear I am too much a petted child of civilisation to relish some of these conveniences," continued the doctor, grimly. "My bones are old and will resent hardships. I shall send Walla upon one of our horses to-morrow—they are branded like all the horses in the country—to Paramatta to buy us a pair of hair-mattresses. Take possession of those blankets, my boy. It's time to turn in."

Chandos was at work repairing the door.

"We'll barricade it to-night," said the doctor. "I have no fear of our new allies. Let the door go until morning."

He commenced leisurely to undress himself.

Chandos was about to move the table as a barricade, when the hurried tramp of feet was heard without, and the black chief burst abruptly into their presence.

The doctor stared in alarm.

"What's wanted now?" he demanded.

"I came back to say," said Wymerie, breathlessly, "that we all friendly, all honest. We keep to our bargain so long as you keep to yours."

"Yes," said the Englishmen.

"But I forgot to say that the hill-tribe very bad!" said Wymerie, solemnly. "Mackenzie shot and kill three hill-men like opossum. They won't make treaty—they kill you! We help you all we can, but you must be very sharp all the time, or they kill you with spears or waddies!"

He turned and disappeared as swiftly as he had come.

"Well, upon my soul," said the doctor, gloomily, sitting down upon a rough three-legged stool, "as soon as one danger is conquered, another arises! It's a tough look-out for us, my boy. I almost fear that in leaving Sydney for Garra-Garra, we have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire! There's danger and trouble ahead!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Gazing aside from the belt of the beam,
Safe in the shadow we foolishly seem.

THE new Governor of New South Wales entered upon the discharge of his official duties with zeal and enthusiasm.

He called the members of his council together, discussed with them colonial grievances, and arrived at a fair understanding of colonial affairs. He set straight at once the complications that had been caused by his delay in arriving.

He redressed certain crying grievances, and displayed a discretion that promised well for the future of the colony.

He was, unquestionably, a man of marked ability. Clear-headed, resolute, and far-sighted, his measures were approved by his coadjutors and the best men in the country, and he found himself extremely popular with nearly all classes.

His life-long ambition seemed at last to be realised. A peer of the English realm, governor of an important colony, the head of a small court, flattered and honoured, he seemed to stand upon a pinnacle from which nothing could hurl him.

Proprietor of a palace, absolute in his sphere

as a Turkish Sultan in his, it seemed as if he had reached the summit of his hopes and ambitions—as if earth held no further prize which he could care to grasp.

Yet, as absolute contentment and perfect satisfaction are things the most difficult of attainment in this world, so his cup of bliss was not quite overflowing. One thing yet was lacking. That one thing was the possession of the girl he loved.

For her and for his greed he had sinned most terribly—to possess her and the barony of Strathmere he had sold himself to Satan. The barony was his, but she was not yet won.

He loved her with a love akin to madness. The sound of her step or her voice thrilled him. Her presence was a joy, her absence was pain. To make her Lady Strathmere, to see her mistress of his palace, was all that was now lacking to his perfect happiness, he frequently assured himself.

Mr. Pelham watched the course of the new governor with keen interest and admiration. He believed that there was no political height to which the baron might not climb, and he set his soul upon his daughter's marriage with his host.

Miss Pelham, in her absorption on other affairs, remained quite unconscious of these schemes. She knew, of course, that Lord Strathmere admired her, but he had never spoken to her one word of love. He treated her with a reverential courtesy that would have won the heart of any other woman.

He paid her little delicate attentions; he showed always in his manner that he considered her the one woman in the world to be honoured above all others.

He consulted her tastes, and gratified them in an unobtrusive way; he was so gentle and kind, so pleasant and so thoughtful of her welfare, that had Gerda's heart not already been given to Ralph Chandos she must have inevitably been ensnared by his wiles.

But her love made her wise; it quickened her womanly intuitions and instincts; it kept alive her suspicions of him; it steered her heart to his insidious approaches; it fortified her against his well-planned attacks.

To clear the name of Ralph Chandos was the aim and object of her life. She measured other men by her unfortunate young lover, and it is needless to say that very many held in high repute fell in her estimation very far below that lofty standard.

The new governor sought relaxation from his severe duties in society. He established a court, and held stately receptions. He inaugurated brilliant festivities.

There was a select upper circle of governmental officials at Sydney, and its members entered with delight into the new pleasures prepared for them.

A round of balls and parties was instituted, and Miss Pelham shone upon all occasions as the belle and the beauty, "the bright particular star" of the festival.

Mr. Pelham sent home to England for a second outfit of peculiar magnificence for his daughter, to replace that left on board the "Clytemnestra."

There were good shops in Sydney, as has been said, and the heiress of Pelham Wold had no difficulty in equipping herself suitably for every occasion, but the worthy banker, in his own mind, looked upon his daughter as the future Baroness Strathmere, the future governor's wife, and nothing money could buy was considered too fine or splendid for one about to contract so brilliant an alliance.

At the time of the arrival of the "Duke of Wellington" at Port Jackson, two English men-of-war had been lying in the harbour. Nearly the first official act of Governor Lord Strathmere had been to order these two vessels—as he had a right to do—in pursuit of the "Clytemnestra," which was believed to be still cruising in the waters of the southern Indian Ocean, in quest of her escaped prey.

The vessels had departed upon their errand, and the governor had settled down to his duties and employments.

Ralph Chandos had escaped him for the present, but he intended that escape to be only temporary.

He had no wish to excite public comment in any way unfavourable to himself, and purposed working out his dark schemes in a secret and underhand manner.

"I'll bring him and the doctor up presently with a round turn," he promised himself. "I will lie in wait, and watch my chance."

His secretary had been deputed to discover the destination of the doctor and Chandos, and had no difficulty in tracing them. He made his report promptly, and Lord Strathmere made a note of it.

"I shall know where to find him," he muttered. "When I get ready, I shall swoop down upon Garra-Garra, and attend to Mr. Ralph Chandos. If Carew has heard correctly, the blacks may remove him, and the doctor too, from my path. And that reminds me. I'll find a trusty fellow, a convict, or native, to go up to the hill-region and stir up the aborigines against them."

The idea seemed to him too good to be lost.

He proceeded to act upon it so slyly that even his secretary did not suspect his purpose.

There were blacks and half-breeds in Sydney, many of them employed by the government to "track" runaway convicts or hostile persons of their own race.

They were especially fitted for this work, being as keen of scent as a blood-hound, patient and tireless.

Lord Strathmere found, after considerable secret inquiry, using a convict servant to conduct it, a native from the neighbourhood of Garra-Garra.

To this man he unfolded something of his secret purpose.

He first bound him to secrecy by such oaths as the black was likely to respect. He next set forth his own dignity and power. He then said that to the northward and eastward there dwelt an old English doctor, with his convict servant.

The latter was a very dangerous criminal. He had committed murder in England, and barely escaped hanging.

This man and the doctor must be put out of the way—not murdered outright—but murdered just as surely.

He wanted the hill-tribe of the blacks nearest the plain of Garra-Garra to destroy the doctor and his convict-servant. He wanted the hill-tribe stirred up against the two whites, and goaded to fury against them. He desired the destruction of the two Englishmen to be utter and remorseless.

The black signified his comprehension.

The governor then informed him, in a terrible voice, that if he breathed one word of his—Lord Strathmere's—interest in the affair, he would have his heart cut from his living body.

"Your wife must stay in Sydney as a hostage for your good faith and perfect secrecy," he concluded. "Do this work as I have commanded. When you bring me proofs that the doctor and the convict are dead, I will give you much money, a horse, and fine clothes, besides a rifle."

The black, thus bribed and threatened, was completely won over to his cause. Having received added and more minute instructions, he hurried away upon his nefarious errand.

"It's a matter of necessity," said the governor to himself. "The doctor has heard Chandos's story, and believes it. Moreover, he has fixed his suspicions upon me as my uncle's murderer. I cannot enjoy my grand-urs while he lives. He is my Mordecai at the gate. He must be swept aside from my path."

No remorse clouded his enjoyments or disturbed his slumbers. He believed that success was to attend upon all his movements for ever.

Miss Pelham had been a month at Government House, and still had not heard a word of or from Ralph Chandos.

She was secretly troubled and uneasy upon

his account, not knowing what had befallen him; and not daring to ask, since her father had forbidden her even to mention his name, when one morning at breakfast her doubts and uneasiness were removed by the arrival of a letter from Dr. Marsh postmarked at Paramatta.

The good doctor had sent Walla on horseback to the nearest town to post this letter, having bethought himself of her probable anxieties.

The post-bag was brought in by the butler, and the governor unlocked it and distributed its contents.

Most of the letters, of which there were many, were for himself, many of them official. There were two or three tradesmen's circulars for Mr. Pelham, and there were two letters for Miss Pelham. One was a milliner's announcement, the other was the doctor's letter.

The governor stared at this, noticing the postmark.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Pelham," he exclaimed, delivering the missive to her, "but I fancied there must be some mistake. I did not know that you had any acquaintances at Paramatta."

"I have none," replied the young lady, taking up the envelope. "This is meant for me, though. It may be a business circular."

She opened it, and the letter dropped out.

The governor and Mr. Pelham both regarded her with an idle sort of interest. Her face flushed and paled; she could not repress the outward signs of her inward agitation.

Yet the letter simply stated that the writer had bought a farm up country, called Garra-Garra, and also a licensed sheep-run, and that Ralph Chandos was with him.

He spoke of Chandos as his "dear, adopted son," who bore his reverses bravely and with noble fortitude.

No line was inclosed from our hero. The doctor concluded, formally, by expressing a hope that Miss Pelham had quite recovered from the fatigues of her prolonged voyage.

"Who is your letter from, Gerda?" asked her father.

"From Dr. Marsh," was the reply.

"Marsh? Where is he? At Paramatta?"

Gerda was compelled to give the substance of her letter. Ralph Chandos's presence at Garra-Garra was inquired after by the governor, and Miss Pelham was forced to acknowledge it.

"I will answer Dr. Marsh," said the banker, frowning. "I resent his impertinence in daring to address my daughter."

"Oh, papa! He is an old gentleman, and we all knew him so well. How can his letter to me be an impertinence?"

"He had no business to write to you in that way of a convict. Chandos was sent out here as a punishment for an awful crime, not to be caddled and 'adopted,' and that sort of thing!" cried Mr. Pelham, indignantly. "Governor, you should see to this. Dr. Marsh abuses the trust placed in him. Chandos should be removed from his care."

Miss Pelham grew white to the lips.

"Oh, papa!" she exclaimed, her passionate young voice full of keen reproach, "you are too cruel! Do you suppose that Ralph can be happy under any circumstances so long as he remains a convict and an outcast? My poor, dear boy! Oh, papa, you used to be so pitiful to the unfortunate. How can you be so hard upon him—wronged and innocent?"

Mr. Pelham thought it fortunate that the secretary and the servants were absent. His genial face kindled with an unwonted anger. He would have spoken sharply but for the interference of his host.

Lord Strathmore, strong in the faith that his glib messenger would accomplish the evil work assigned to him, and work out the destruction of both the doctor and Chandos, affected to sympathise with the girl.

She flashed upon him a grateful look that haunted him throughout the remainder of the day, and arose abruptly, quitting the room.

"I have found out how to manage her," thought the governor, delightedly. "There was

warmth and friendliness in her look. My case is not hopeless. She certainly does not hate me. When Chandos is dead she is sure to turn to me for sympathy. Always successful, I am to be successful in love."

He trifled with his fruit, and became thoughtful.

"Governor," said the banker, who delighted in uttering the title, and giving his friend his full meed of honour, "I fear that you are making a mistake."

Lord Strathmore started.

"How?" he asked.

"In regard to Gerda. You love her, but you have never told her so. Her infatuation for Chandos is a girl's first fancy—nothing more. He is disgraced, and she ought to despise him; but women are curious beings. Even his yellow jacket could not disgust her. She fancies that he is a martyr. Now, if he were set to work in a chain-gang, some of her fine romantic notions would disappear."

"I will think of it."

"If she knew that you, whom she sees courted and honoured, loved her, I think she might contrast you with Chandos, and open her eyes," said the banker. "If you really love her, tell her so."

"But, loving him, she would be sure to reject me!" said Lord Strathmore.

"I will prepare her for your communication. I will let her know that my happiness depends upon her marriage with you," said Mr. Pelham.

"She is a good girl, with all her infatuation. She has never disobeyed me, Strathmore. She has been the most loving and tender of daughters. If I urge her she will consent. I know you will make her happy. Heavens! What can a girl ask for more than a title and position such as you can give her?"

"Backed by my love and devotion!" said the governor, his voice betraying emotion. "Prepare her for my proposal, if you will, Pelham. I will speak to her this very day."

The banker's face flushed with pride and gratification. He shook hands warmly with his chosen son-in-law.

"I will give her time to recover from that miserable letter," he said, "and then I will go to her."

At this moment the door opened, and the secretary entered the room.

He had gone out early into the town, and his manner was full of excitement. He seemed bristling with news.

"If you please, my lord," he exclaimed, "the two ships of war have been signalled. They are at this moment entering Port Jackson. And the 'Clytemnestra' is with them, a prisoner."

(To be Continued.)

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE next morning Lord Mountheron presented himself at Clyffebourne punctually at the library, where Lady Vivian presently joined him.

Her ladyship was not looking well this morning, as he noted with concern. There was no colour in her cheeks or lips.

There were bistre circles under her dusk eyes, and a sadness and wistfulness in her expression that troubled him.

He held out his hand: hers, small and cold, lay like ice within his grasp.

"You are ill this morning?" he said, gently, in a tone of sympathy, his pale eyes resting upon her in ardent love.

"I am not well," she answered, wearily, sinking into a chair. "But I am glad to see you, marquise. I have something to say to you."

"About my suit? You have words of encouragement for me, I hope, dear Lady Vivian." And he seated himself at a little distance from her, in obedience to her invitation.

"You have done nothing towards the fulfil-

ment of my commission? You have found no clue to the real murderer, you say."

The gentle face of the marquise became pitifully tender.

"My dear Lady Vivian," he said, softly, "why will you cling to your illusion? The murderer was discovered eighteen years ago. Shall you be wiser than the judge and jury that discovered his guilt from the terrible array of evidence against him? Vivian, the murderer has been found; he has gone before a far more terrible than that of man. Why distress yourself for one who has been in his grave so many years?"

"I never believed him guilty. I knew him too well," said Lady Vivian.

"But the crime was not premeditated. No one believes that. It was the result of an impulse."

"I don't know how or why it was committed. I only know he did not do it."

"Vivian, your love prejudices you against the truth. Your reason is blindfolded."

"Because my love sees clearer than reason could do. He was incapable of murder, whatever the provocation. His brother had ill-used him, and he had made some idle threats, but he would have gone forth a beggar, rather than to have remained as master, if to remain he must commit a crime."

"You must love him still," sighed the marquise.

"Love him! He was my husband. I shall love him always, and honour him above all men, the noblest, grandest soul the Creator ever made, and he most cruelly wronged."

"You did not use to speak so much of him, Vivian. Is it that this coast and this old house revive the old memories so strongly?"

"Perhaps. Tell me, marquise, do you believe that he is really dead?"

Lord Mountheron's heart seemed to stop beating, but no muscle of his well-trained face betrayed the shock that simple question gave him. It was more than a minute before his gentle drawing tones could make answer:

"What a singular question. Of course he is dead. He died in South America. I think we discussed this question before. Why do you ask, Lady Vivian?"

"Because—because—we never had proofs, you know, proofs beyond dispute."

"Do you think that he lives?"

The pale face of Lady Vivian grew yet paler, and there was an odd hesitancy in her manner as she replied evasively:

"I know not what to think. It has seemed to me that he may be alive. I would give all I have to know that he is alive, to see him face to face without disguise, and to talk with him."

"That could never be. He would not dare return to England, least of all to Cornwall. And if he did, he would not wish to see you, Lady Vivian, the wife who was divorced from him while he lay in prison, condemned to die."

"Then, if he came to Cornwall, whom would he seek?" asked Lady Vivian. "You, his kinsman, who bear the title that is rightfully his? Would he come to you, Rowland Ingestre?"

"If he wanted a friend, I do not see why he should not apply to me."

"Has he ever done so?" cried Lady Vivian, in an impassioned voice. "Has he revealed himself to you?"

In her excitement she betrayed more than she knew.

Lord Mountheron took the alarm.

"I have never seen Lord Stratford Heron since he fled the country," he declared solemnly. "He has never revealed himself to me in any way, by letter or word of mouth; I give you my word of honour as a gentleman."

"If—if he were to come to Cornwall," she said, "and you knew of his presence here, what would you do?"

"I fear I should be untrue to my sense of justice and a traitor to my country. I should get him out of England as secretly and as quickly as possible. I am no Brutus."

Lady Vivian drew a long breath.

"If he were alive," she said, presently, "and if he came to you, as he might do, would you not tell him that that divorce was not of my seeking, and that I loved him always and believed in him always—that I would as soon have doubted an angel in heaven as doubt him?"

Lord Mountheron bowed gravely, his heart was full of bitterness.

"I might tell him all that, Vivian," he said. "I would certainly clear you of all blame, even in the sight of a convicted murderer. But he will never come to Mount Heron. I shall never be called upon to excuse you in any way to him. Besides, why should your conduct be criticised by him? Whatever you once were to him, you are nothing now, not even if he lives. You are no more his wife than you are mine."

"I know it, but I was his wife; I never sought to sever the tie between us. If I could see him I would tell him so. I am called proud; but I tell you that I would give up everything I have held dear, rank, fortune, society, everything! for his dear sake. For him, too, would become a wanderer and a fugitive upon the earth."

"This to me, Lady Vivian?" said Lord Mountheron, with white lips.

"The truth to you, marquise, if not to others. You have asked me to marry you. I have esteemed you, and have given grounds for hope that you should know that I belong, heart and soul, to my dear and honoured husband."

"He is not your husband," interrupted the marquise, jealously.

"Then, if he loved me still, and would have me, I would become his wife."

"And that is what you have to say to me, Vivian, who have loved you for years, and whom you have certainly encouraged to expect a reward? You love a condemned murderer. No, we will not mince words. He is that if he lives, and he is not worthy to enter your pure presence. You reject me."

That indescribable look which Alex had twice seen upon Lady Vivian's countenance flitted across it now. Fear, horror, loathing, and perplexity mingled in it, but what that expression meant, or what had called it into being, one could not surmise.

"I cannot be false to myself, and I cannot deceive you, Marquis," she said, after a pause. "Lord Stratford Heron has my heart, whether he be living or dead."

"But I would be content with your esteem, Vivian, confident that in time I could win your love," urged the marquise. "The past is too strong within your breast just now. It was a fatal move of mine, urging you to come to Cornwall. I thought that the sight of the princely home that you once reigned over would win upon you as nothing else would. I knew you loved Mount Heron, and I thought that every stone of the old castle would plead for me. But it seems they serve only to bring back your past, instead of inviting you to come back to them as mistress. It was a fatal mistake on my part. I will not urge my suit now upon you. I will not take your answer now, Vivian, but you shall give it to me when we are back in town, and time and gaiety shall have banished these sorrowful recollections."

"I cannot feel that it would be honourable to permit you to hope, Marquis."

"But I shall hope. If I were to stop hoping I should stop living. You are more to me than you think, Vivian. You will think differently a month hence. Shall you go up to town to-morrow?"

"I have decided to remain a week longer," replied Lady Vivian, with embarrassment.

"My motions shall wait upon yours. I will go up to London when you go, not sooner. May I not expect to see you again at the castle? Will you not reconsider your refusal to dine again at Mount Heron? Mrs. Ingestre is recovering rapidly, and will be able to receive you."

Lady Vivian had declined to go again to Mount Heron.

She now reconsidered her determination, experiencing a longing to revisit the castle, and accepting the invitation so informally given.

"I will come," she said, "if Mrs. Ingestre

invites my guest with me while these delightful moonlight nights continue."

"I accept your promise as a bidding to hope," said Lord Mountheron, arising. "Will you name a day convenient to you?"

"Tuesday morning—this is Saturday, you know."

"You will hear from Augusta to-day. Try and banish these sad thoughts of one all unworthy of you, Vivian, and permit me to gladden your future. I know that I can make your life brighter and happier. But enough—au revoir, until Tuesday evening."

He kissed her hand and withdrew.

"I wonder," said Lady Vivian to herself, when she was once more alone, "if I shall see—that pedler, if I go to the castle. Would he not be likely to be hanging about Mount Heron? Once let me see him again, he shall not escape me! The marquise suspects nothing, and I cleverly concealed from him my own suspicions."

Meanwhile, as Lord Mountheron rode away, he soliloquised:

"She has seen him, but he has not revealed himself to her. She has recognised him. I must tell Pierre Renaud of this, and set him anew upon the track of the fugitive felon. One thing is sure—the sleuth-hounds are close upon the scent; she will not see him again."

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE evening of Tuesday, which had proved so eventful in the history of Alex's mission, descended heavily in storm and darkness upon Mount Heron.

The wind blew fiercely in from the sea in sharp and angry gusts, now and then raging like an unloosed demon.

It was a night for shipwreck and disaster. The sea roared and moaned against the grim rocks of the coast, and now and then, from the deep roar of the surf and the raging of the wind, arose an eldritch screech, as of some lost soul in torment.

The rain beat pitilessly upon the castle walls and windows; nature seemed blotted out, so hidden were sea and shore in the thick black mist.

The castle glowed like a grand beacon set upon a hill.

The windows were unshuttered, and the lights flared out into the desolate night.

The ruins were hung with Chinese lanterns all aglow.

The chapel was but dimly lighted. Its corners were full of dusky shadows.

No gaiety was expected to penetrate to this sacred retreat, and a religious stillness, a pale gloom pervaded it.

Throughout the castle flowers bloomed in prodigal luxuriance.

The conservatories and hot-houses, the finest in Cornwall, had been rifled of their choicest splendours to make the contrast within the dwelling to the scene without absolutely perfect.

At every landing upon the staircase were dwarf palms in great tilted boxes, and tall Chinese vases crowded with flowers and hung with drooping vines.

In the great hall, and in the drawing-room, sea-coal fires burned in polished grates, and blossoms of vivid colouring filled every available nook.

In the latter apartment the pale-yellow satin furniture gleamed in the mellow light of hundreds of waxen candles, as if bathed in sunshine.

Lord Mountheron grew nervous as he listened to the wind and the sea.

It was scarcely likely that Lady Vivian Clyffe would leave her home upon a night like this. Mrs. Ingestre shared his uneasiness, and joined him in the immense drawing-room to impart her anxieties to him.

"Lady Vivian certainly won't come," declared the lady, "unless she intends to pay a most delicate compliment to Rowland. Love might bring her here—nothing else would."

"Yes it must be a powerful motive that

would bring her out upon a night like this," assented the marquise. "Hear that wind! How it storms! It sounds as if all the witches of the lower regions were let loose on their wild revels. No delicate lady would be out on such a night. They will not come."

"I am not so sure of that," declared Mrs. Ingestre. "How would Lady Vivian suffer exposure or discomfort? She would step into her closed carriage in her own porte-cochère, be driven here with her blinds down and well wrapped in shawls and rugs, and alight in our porte-cochère. Not a drop of rain could fall upon her, and the wind could not so much as ruffle her hair. She has engaged to marry you, I suppose, Rowland, and she would not wish to disappoint you. She will come."

Mrs. Ingestre's prediction proved correct.

A powerful motive impelled the Lady Vivian to visit Mount Heron that night—a motive she could not resist. The storm had no terrors for her; the rain could not dampen her resolve.

The young Earl of Kingscourt descended to the drawing-room in evening dress. He was convinced that no guests from Clyffe-bourne would appear that evening.

Alex soon after appeared, in her pale blue silk dress, with decorations of white hot-house flowers, which looked like tiny stars sown on her bosom and in her hair.

Lord Mountheron regarded her gloomily, and then glanced at the clock. It was upon the stroke of seven.

He was about to give expression to his fears, when the sound of wheels penetrated to his ears, rising distinctly above all other sounds in a momentary lull of the wind. A carriage rattled into the porte-cochère.

His face beamed with joy and relief, the marquise hastened to the hall and to the entrance and received his guests with uncovered head, upon the steps, under a great lighted lantern.

Six ladies alighted from the commodious vehicle, and the last was the Lady Vivian Clyffe.

She ran lightly up the steps, not seeming to see Lord Mountheron's proffered assistance. She paused in the hall, greeted him courteously, and followed her friends who were already on their way to the cloak-room, guided by the housekeeper.

When Lady Vivian entered the drawing-room, which she did alone, a moment after her guests, the marquise was struck with the splendour of her appearance.

Always superb in her beauty, she shone to-night like a star.

Her dusky eyes were luminous with unusual fires; the scarlet of her lips was vivid as the geranium blooms in her corsage; she was radiant in every feature; and an unusual softness and sweetness pervaded her expression, replacing the iciness and haughtiness of her usual demeanour.

A brightness and hopefulness no one had ever marked in her since the occurrence of the Mount Heron tragedy, seemed to radiate her imperial loveliness.

She was more gracious than usual, more gentle, more tender. It seemed as if the fires, that had apparently burned to ashes years ago on the altar of her heart, had been kindled to new life and vigour.

Lord Mountheron thrilled with admiration for her, and his worshipping love of her received new impulse. She was a very queen of grace and beauty, and had never seemed more royally lovely than to-night.

Alex watched her mother's entrance with a jealous pain at her young heart.

"She looks as if some new happiness had come to her!" the girl thought. "It must be she loves the marquise. Nothing but love could bring her out upon a night like this," she added, unconsciously repeating to herself the idea of Mrs. Ingestre.

The mignonette face, not less beautiful than that of Lady Vivian, with a youthful splendour all its own, with great eyes like sapphires, and a tender, wistful, yet resolute mouth, gloomed over suddenly. After all, her cup of success, if she could achieve it, would be tintured with

bitterness, if the Lady Vivian were to love and wed Rowland Ingestre.

"How could papa ever bear to give her up to him?" Alex asked herself. "He would rather die than see her the wife of another. And yet she is not papa's wife. They are divorced, and were he restored to rank and honour to-day, he has no claim upon her. And if he has not, I have not! I would never own for my mother the lady who had been divorced from my father," and her young eyes flashed. "Never! There is a gulf between them that cannot be bridged over, and I am upon papa's side of that gulf."

Lady Vivian's dusky eyes sought out her young companion. She came to Alex and greeted her with smiling grace and sweetness, and engaged her in a brief conversation.

Then dinner was announced. Lord Mountheron gave his arm to Lady Vivian, his most distinguished and honoured guest, and there being a dearth of gentlemen, Lord Kingscourt was compelled to take in the elderly countess—one of the guests at Clyffebourne.

Alex followed the other ladies, walking alone, and carrying her small head a little more proudly than usual, perhaps because some of the ladies looked askance at her.

All of Lady Vivian's rank and social influence could not avail to make Alex popular with these people, who resented her reticence, and chose to deduce therefrom the theory that her antecedents were not what they should be, her family disreputable, and herself an adventuress.

They believed, thanks to Lady Markham's insinuations, that Lady Vivian had been cleverly imposed upon by a girl whose beauty and apparent innocence had blinded her ladyship's usual good judgment.

The dinner was a culinary triumph. The chef had won for himself new laurels. Every dish was a success, and the wines were old and almost priceless.

The decorations were in faultless taste, and not an incident occurred to mar the outward harmony of the scene.

The gentlemen returned to the drawing-room with the ladies.

After coffee had been served there, and conversation had brought about a genial state of enjoyment, Lady Vivian, who had lapsed into abstraction several times, proposed a visit to the ruins.

The proposition was acted upon. Wraps were brought for the ladies, to shield them from the change of temperature, and a general adjournment was made to the ruins.

The passage thither was under cover. The stone floors were, many of them, covered with carpeting or matting.

In the ivy-draped windows lanterns were hung, as upon the walls and from the ceilings. In such of the ancient and capacious chimneys as remained intact, great fires of logs blazed merrily.

The relics and trophies of ancient days, the carved beams and mantel-pieces were displayed to fullest advantage.

Lord Mountheron acted the part of cicerone, and exhibited a secret chamber, approached by a cleverly concealed staircase in the thick walls, and told in graphic style the story of some lord of the manor who had once been hidden there for days, while his enemies sought far and wide for him, and who finally effected his escape to France.

The secret room was examined with interest. Lady Vivian seemed especially interested, and displayed a fluttering interest in the narration.

"These old ruins have held many a secret in their day," said the marquise. "The Herons of Mount Heron have dwelt here for eight centuries. In the feudal days, and in the times of war, there were great doings here—assembly of troops in yonder courtyard, or in the hall—sledges, flights, hidings, and victories and triumphs—all in turn. Only two years ago we discovered a secret dungeon in the vaults below, but no one knew the legend attached to it, if there was one."

"It seems to me," said Lady Markham, re-

flectively, "that I have heard of the existence of a secret chamber at Mount Heron, where a cavalier of the house once lay hidden for weeks, while the castle was occupied by enemies, who sought for him in vain. When the tide of fortune and war turned, and his side was triumphant, he came forth unharmed."

"That chamber, known as the 'Cavalier's Retreat,' is somewhere under or about the chapel," said the marquise. "I do not know its whereabouts, or even that it really exists, but the tradition is, that each reigning marquis of the house imparted the secret to his son and heir. If there exists such a chamber, my unfortunate predecessor may have been aware of it, but I do not think he ever told anyone of its existence. He certainly never told me—but then, he never contemplated the possibility that I should succeed him," added Lord Mountheron.

Lady Vivian's cheeks flushed. She knew that the secret of that hidden room had been made known to her husband, but he had never shared the knowledge with her, deeming it of no importance.

How she wished she knew it now! That secret seemed to her of the greatest importance, in the light of the now suspicious thronging upon her.

"And you've no idea where the Cavalier's Retreat is?" asked Lady Markham, regretfully.

"No. The story may be a myth," answered the marquise, indifferently.

"Let us go to the chapel," suggested a gay young member of the party.

Lady Vivian led the way in that direction.

The joyous laughter, the careless speech, the gay badinage, were hushed as the heavy doors of the chapel shut behind them, and the party stood in the dimly-lighted house of worship. The dusky shadows lay thick upon pulpit and chancel, and upon the curtained family pew, and in the corners. The place seemed ghostly and sepulchral.

The younger ladies clustered together and spoke in whispers, but Lady Vivian walked up the shadowy aisle, her little heels clicking upon the marble, her pure, rich, musical voice raised to a higher pitch than she habitually indulged in, her every word ringing sweet and clear and distinct.

She paused by the chancel, and looked up at the lofty, carved pulpit, and around at the benches.

"How many generations of Herons have worshipped here?" she said. "The chapel ought scarcely to be called ruined. We used to hold service here on rainy Sundays, and in winter, and it was then in good repair."

"It is in good repair now, but service is never held here. No servant likes to enter the place; they believe it haunted?"

"Haunted! A church haunted?"

"The servants are ignorant and superstitious. Believing the ruins haunted, they extend the ban to this chapel also—possibly because it is necessary, in coming from the castle, to pass through the ruins to reach it. We keep no chaplain now. When I attend church I go down to the village. The Mountherons, you know, built there a fine modern church, and in it the later members of the family lie buried."

"The murdered marquise with them, I suppose?"

Lord Mountheron assented.

Lady Vivian glanced about her. The remaining members of the party had gone back.

She was alone with her suitor. She shivered slightly, and moved a few steps down the aisle in the direction of the door.

"How this place brings back the past!" she said. "I see no change here since I was in it eighteen years ago. Time seems to have stood still when I regard these walls and seats, and the old pulpit. Eighteen years!"

"A long time," said Lord Mountheron; "but it has passed over you as lightly as a breeze, Lady Vivian. You were a girl then, in spite of the fact that you were a wife and mother. Your beauty has ripened into summer splendour; the bud has become a magnificent rose; the promise has attained to a glorious fulfilment."

His ardent manner brought a faint flush to the lady's cheeks. She moved half way down the aisle, and then paused again. She faced her admirer and the shadowy pulpit.

Lord Mountheron faced her and the door of egress. Her eyes wandered from his face to the pulpit and back again. She felt a sensation of unrest, as if something were about to happen.

The rain beat pitilessly upon the window-panes, the wind howled about the walls.

"A dreary night," said Lady Vivian, drawing her long circular cloak of ermine closer about her.

"Not to me," cried the marquise. "I hear the wind and the rain, but they do not seem to me dreary. Your presence is my sunshine, Vivian. I feared you would not come to-night, and your coming has made me the happiest of men. Nothing sharpens one's appetite for joy like a previous dose of misery."

"Then I ought to have a good appetite for joy," said Lady Vivian, a little bitterly.

"You!" said the marquise, incredulously. "You do not look as if you had ever known a sorrow or a care, Vivian. One would think your life had been all joy. Of course, I know what you must have suffered, but the world can never know. Not a streak of silver is in those dusky tresses; not a line is visible upon that fair brow; you look not over five-and-twenty years of age."

"Thanks," said Lady Vivian, gaily. "A woman likes to hear that Time has forgotten her. The woman of my family retain their youthful looks to a great age. I have heard it said that it was because we are heartless. People with hearts are liable to suffer, and suffering is apt to leave its traces."

"But you are not heartless, Vivian."

"I? No, I am not," cried Lady Vivian, with unexpected fervour. "But I do not wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at."

Lord Mountheron drew a step nearer to her.

"I knew that people belied you when they called you heartless," he said. "I know that you have need of sympathy and close friendship. I feel that I could make your life happier, Vivian, and you could round mine into completeness. People think us betrothed. We are, are we not, in spite of what you said to me last Thursday? Your presence here on a night like this, in a house haunted for you by unpleasant memories, is a token of encouragement to me. Augusta considers it so; everyone present to-night does. I regard you as my promised wife."

His voice rose, and his manner had in it a dash of proprietorship.

Lady Vivian had turned her eyes toward the high pulpit. Her brightness had fled. A deep depression had replaced them. In her gaze was a keen and vivid look of disappointment.

What had she expected? What wild hope had brought her to Mount Heron upon a night like this?

(To be Continued.)

GERMAN BIBLIOGRAPHY.

It appears by an official notification issued at Leipzig that the total number of new German (i.e. published in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) works and new editions published during 1877 and entered at the official Bookseller's Register (corresponding to our entry at Stationers' Hall) at Leipzig was 16,437, being the highest yet reached in any year. The total number of such new works and new editions (for the same countries) registered at Leipzig during the last ten years (1868-77) was 144,155, giving an annual average of 14,415, but it is only within the last four years that this average has been reached and exceeded.

In the year of the Franco-Prussian war (1870) the number fell behind that of the preceding year (1869) by 911; but the next year not only made good this deficit but showed an improvement amounting to 220 new books. The real increase, however, may be considered to have commenced in 1874, when 15,016 new books or

new editions were registered; in 1875 this was increased to 15,759, in 1876 to 15,857, and now 1877 has exceeded the decennial average by 2,022.

THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER.

THE very first glimpse of it reminded one of Hood's "Haunted House," and closer observation only deepened the impression. Black, dismal, forlorn, with the marks of neglect and decay.

It stood close to the water's edge, its dingy walls reflected in the river as in a glass. The black picture beneath frowned back at the black reality above.

All was darkness and shadow. Even the grounds with their funeral fir-trees and solemn pines had a sombre look in perfect keeping with the rest of the scene.

Mrs. Hallam delighted in surprises, and it was with an object that she had directed her coachman to take the low-lying river road for their afternoon drive.

Mrs. Hallam lived in the spacious white house on the hill, and the elegant Hallam carriage was crowded with guests.

It was a large roomy affair, that carriage, and quite the wonder of the neighbourhood with its silver trimmings and velvet cushions, and the four beautiful milk-white horses that whirled it along light as air.

The clever woman of the world knew full well what sort of impression that black building by the river was likely to make on her city guests. But she said not a word until the carriage drew up right in front of the dismantled gate. Then a self-satisfied smile played about her lips at the exclamations that arose on every hand. She had intended a surprise, and this chorus of voices attested her success.

"Yes, it is charmingly romantic, and all that," she said. "I have often wished that somebody would transfer the old house to canvas."

"It would make a weird-looking picture," said Ross Harcourt.

"Lovely!" cried Virginia Greyson. "How like some of those funny old places one stumbles upon occasionally on the Continent. It seems out of place here."

Madeline Merle sat with her mother on the back seat. She said nothing until the chorus of exclamations had subsided. Then, slipping from her place, she turned resolutely towards the gate.

"It is not enough to admire the old house at a distance," she said. "I'm going to explore it."

Mrs. Hallam uttered a cry of alarm. "Come back, Miss Merle. You mustn't think of such a thing."

"The house is not inhabited?"

"No. But—"

Madeline interrupted her with a laugh.

"Enough. There is nobody to be annoyed by the intrusion, or indiet me for trespass."

"The place is haunted," gasped Mrs. Hallam. "The country people tell all sorts of queer stories concerning it."

"Do they? I'm not afraid of ghosts—in broad daylight."

"But you might see something or somebody. One never knows. I wouldn't enter that gate for the world."

"Do come back, my dear," said Mrs. Merle. "I'm sure I don't know why you should wish to explore the place. The sight of it is enough for me."

But the wilful girl had already entered the grounds, and was beyond the reach of her mother's voice. When she saw her disappear round the house in search of a door, Mrs. Merle gave a little shriek of dismay.

"Go after the foolish child, Mr. Harcourt, and bring her back."

"Miss Merle has a will of her own," answered that gentleman, pulling at his moustache. "She would not come at my bidding."

"Pray what is there to be frightened about?" said Virginia Greyson, tossing blonde curls from

shoulders gleaming white as alabaster under costly lace that half concealed, half disclosed them. "Madeline incurs no real danger that I am aware. You can't make anything wonderful out of her wilful freak, if you try."

"I do wish she hadn't gone," sighed Mrs. Merle. "There's something about the place that makes me nervous and uneasy. Though there are no ghosts, tramps and other disreputable characters may be lurking in the grounds."

This was true. Even Ross Harcourt's face took on a graver shade, and he glanced anxiously toward the black, forbidding-looking house, as if irresolute whether to risk Madeline's displeasure by following her, or to remain.

At that moment the girl reappeared. She came directly towards the carriage. Her face was deadly pale, and she carried something half hidden in the folds of her dress. Mrs. Hallam cried out, sharply:

"What's the matter? Did you see the ghost?"

"No."

"But something has frightened you dreadfully. Tell me what it is."

Madeline climbed quickly into her place, and dropped her veil, as if to escape the battery of curious glances brought to bear upon her.

"Let us go home. I am tired," she said, in a weary voice.

The order was given, then all relapsed into silence.

A chill had fallen upon the whole party, they scarcely knew why.

Was it some baleful influence that had emanated from the mysterious old building itself?

When they reached Hillcrest Madeline went directly to her own room. Mrs. Merle, stealing into the chamber like a restless spirit, half an hour later, found the girl lying on the sofa with her face hidden in her hands. She approached and stood beside her.

"My dear child," she said, in a soft, persuasive voice, "look up and tell me what troubles you."

A slight shiver went over the girlish figure.

"Nothing, mamma. Please go away. I'm nervous and hysterical—that's all."

"You can't deceive me, Madeline—I hope you will not try," Mrs. Merle said, a trifle more sharply. "Who did you see at that dreadful old house to disturb you so?"

"Nothing."

"Don't tell me—"

The sentence ended in a shrill cry. Just at that instant Mrs. Merle's glance fell upon something lying on the sofa, half concealed by the pillow. It was only a queer-looking old book bound in Roman vellum, but she caught it up quickly and glanced at the fly-leaf. It proved to be a work on metaphysics printed in the German language, with the single name "Adophe" written in pencil just above the title.

The sight of that book had a curious effect on Mrs. Merle. She staggered backward, whitening and losing her breath.

"Good heavens!" she gasped. "It is his—the very same!"

Madeline sat up, greatly excited; her cheeks were pale, and her eyes shone.

"I did not wish you to see the book, mamma. I thought I had hidden it. But my brain is all in a whirl. I scarcely know what I am doing."

"There is no mistake—it is his!" Mrs. Merle said, in a frightened whisper.

"Yes."

"That is what you were hiding in the folds of your dress."

"I found it lying on the grass, near the old house, mamma. Of course I recognised it in a moment. I doubt if there is another copy of that work in England."

On Mrs. Merle's face came a strange look, a blending of anger and terror.

"He must be here—very near us," she said at length, in a cold, hard voice. "He always took that book with him wherever he went."

"Yes."

"Oh, dear! Have we not suffered enough already through that man's instrumentality? Must he be permitted to follow us everywhere,

murdering our peace, and ruining our plans? It is too much."

She moved with a low moan to the window, and stood there pressing her cold forehead against the glass. Her face looked drawn and hard; all its sweetness and girlish beauty had vanished. She seemed strangely changed all at once.

Madeline went presently and clung round her neck, a few hot tears falling down her face.

"I know it is hard, mamma," she whispered. "But we must bear this trouble patiently. I'm trying to meet it bravely—that is the better way."

"And yet the heaviest portion will fall upon you."

"No matter. I am young and strong. Whatever comes, we always have each other. That thought comforts me."

Mrs. Merle drew the girl into her embrace with a passionate cry.

"Heaven bless you, darling. You are my only solace. So long as we are spared to each other it is wrong and wicked to complain."

For the next day Mrs. Hallam had planned a row on the river and a lunch under the trees in a romantic glen three miles below. Mrs. Merle remained at home, confined to her room with a nervous headache; but she insisted that Madeline should make one of the party.

The row down the river was delightful. Even Madeline felt her spirits revive, and for a season forgot her forebodings. The sweet singing of the birds, the steady splashing of the oars, the low murmur of voices and the ripple of light laughter, all seemed rhythmical parts of the same divine melody.

Later she was standing under the trees in the glen, listening in a dreamy mood to Ross Harcourt's eloquent speech, when Miss Greyson, coming up abruptly, brought back with a word her half-forgotten fears and troubles.

"Do you see that queer-looking man, Madeline? He has been watching you this last half hour. Now he is coming toward us. I do believe he intends speaking to you."

The girl looked in a frightened way down the glen to the point Miss Greyson indicated. A strange man was approaching with a slow, irresolute step. He was dressed quite shabbily, and wore a slouch hat drawn over his eyes. The word vagabond seemed to be written all over him.

Madeline felt her heart beat very fast, but she stilled it. The experience of the previous day had not left her wholly unprepared for an emergency like this.

"The man's a tramp, of course," Virginia Greyson went on, in a careless tone. "Mrs. Hallam had better keep an eye on her silver. He has seen its glitter from afar."

Madeline was breathlessly watching the man's movements. She saw him pause at length and parley a few moments with one of the village lads, who had followed the party to the glen to sell oranges and nuts. The result of that conference manifested itself at once.

The strange man gave the boy some money, and transferred the basket of fruit and nuts to his own arm. This accomplished, he drew near with a firm, assured step, as though he had found the excuse he sought for intruding.

Madeline's face was as grey as ashes. She stood still, like one who has not the strength to stir. She would not look at the man, though he tried several times to arrest her gaze.

It would have puzzled anybody to guess the man's age. He might have been anywhere from thirty to forty-five. His was one of those handsome blonde faces that wear so well. It would have been singularly attractive, too, but for the dissipated expression it wore.

"Oranges? Buy some oranges?" he said, in a musical voice, presenting his basket for inspection. "You'll find them fresh and sweet."

Ross Harcourt purchased a few, but the man seemed in no haste to go. He tossed over the yellow fruit in a nervous way, still keeping his eyes fixed furtively on Madeline. Some minutes elapsed before he gathered up his wares and departed.



[PERIL.]

Miss Greyson looked after him with a meaning smile.

"Didn't I say you had made a conquest, Madelaine?" she exclaimed. "The fellow scarcely noticed anybody else. You have no occasion to feel ashamed. He's handsome enough for a prince."

The girl did not reply. Presently she sat down on a fallen log, as if all life had left her. When Mr. Harcourt and Virginia drew near with words of commiseration and offers of assistance, she waved them away.

"Let me alone for a few moments—that is all I want," she said. "I can't bear to have anybody nigh me. I've felt nervous and hysterical all the morning."

So they left her to recover by herself. But Virginia had no intention of permitting the opportunity to pass unimproved, for here, at last, was a chance to disillusionise Mr. Harcourt—cure him effectually, perhaps, of his evident penchant for Miss Merle.

"Here's a mystery right under our noses," she said, as they walked away. "What does it mean?"

"A mystery?" he repeated.

"Are you so blind as not to have seen it? Madelaine knows more of that handsome tramp than she would care to tell."

"Oh, it can't be!"

"It is. You saw how agitated she was just now? Well, my eyes began to be opened yesterday. It was while we waited before that black building by the river."

Ross Harcourt looked up quickly.

"What discovery did you make at that time?"

"I saw what none of the rest seemed to notice, a face at the window. It was the face of that tramp."

"The young man made a gesture of impatience."

"That may be true," he said. "What then? I don't know what reason you have for mixing him up, in any way, in Miss Merle's affairs."

Virginia lost colour. She saw that the conclusion to which she had jumped was rather far-fetched. But, untenable as was the stand she had taken, she still felt assured that her suspicions were not groundless ones, after all.

"Wait," she said. "It is of no use to argue the question. But you will soon see that I am right."

Two hours later, the festivities were broken up abruptly. One of those sudden tempests so frequent in mid-summer had arisen. Heavy black clouds had gathered unnoticed by those in the glen, shut in as they were by hills and trees. The near roll of thunder was the first warning they received of the gathering storm.

There was a general rush for the boats. These were soon filled, for several families from the village had joined in the excursion. Madelaine never knew exactly how it happened, but she found herself at length standing alone with Ross Harcourt on the river bank.

"There's a small boat just above the bend

yonder," he said, taking her hand. "It's the only one left. You must go with me."

Madelaine followed submissively. She knew that a man was sitting in one end of the boat, but did not notice him particularly until Ross had lifted her in and said, in his quick way:

"Here's a guinea, my fine fellow. It is yours if you get us home before the storm bursts."

"All right."

At the sound of that voice Madelaine started as if she had received a blow. Ross himself looked round, surprised and vexed. The man sitting so upright with his hat slouched over his eyes was the handsome tramp.

"Sit still, miss, or you'll upset us," he said, a little roughly, for the girl had risen to her feet.

With one strong, vigorous push, he sent the boat, quivering like a thing of life, towards the current. Madelaine resumed her seat, looking very pale. She felt the tramp's eyes were on her face, but she sedulously shunned his gaze.

"What are you doing here?" Ross Harcourt demanded, in a stern tone, of the man.

"It's my boat, sir. If you don't like to go in it, I'll put you on shore again."

Ross glanced at the sky. The tempest was shaking out its black banners right above their heads. Each roll of thunder sounded nearer and more appalling.

"Go on," he said.

The man rowed in sullen silence. He still made an effort, ever and anon, to meet Madelaine's eye, as if seeking some sign of recognition. But none came.

At length Ross Harcourt touched his arm.

"Take care," he said, sharply. "You can't know this channel, after all. Don't you see those rocks?"

They lay directly in their course—perhaps half-a-dozen in all—lifting their slimy black backs a foot or so above the water. Ross had heard this spoken of as a dangerous spot, one to be avoided. And yet the man was pulling straight towards it.

"Stop!" he cried, again, for the man paid no heed. "Do you mean to drown us?"

"I know what I'm about," came the sullen response.

"Turn the boat's head instantly."

Ross spoke these last words in a tone of command. Something in the man's eyes, a strange, steely glitter, told him there was no time to waste. He looked capable of anything.

A minute's hesitation followed on the part of the man at the oars. Ross looked him straight in the face.

"See here," he said, sternly, "I don't know what you mean; but you've taken the wrong fellow to trifle with. You make another false move at your peril."

A sneering laugh was the only answer vouchsafed. But the man bore heavily on his right oar, sweeping clear of the rocks. Ross saw that they would be borne quite a distance out of their course, down the river, but the necessity could no longer be avoided.

"You'd better pull for the nearest landing-place," he said, presently. "The storm is just ready to burst. Once on the shore, I'm sure we can find some kind of shelter."

The man sullenly complied. A few big drops pattered into the water just as the boat grazed the sand.

The tramp put out his hands to lift Madelaine out, but she sprang to the other side, and climbed up the bank through water that was ankle deep.

"Take me home," she said, clutching Ross Harcourt's arm. "I don't mind the rain. Only take me home."

"I will," he answered.

Indeed there was nothing else to be done. Looking all round, he saw no chance of shelter save that afforded by the trees. Drawing the girl closer to his side, he moved swiftly into the recesses of the grove that lined the river-bank at this point.

The tramp seemed disposed to follow, but a look from Ross sent him scowling back to his boat.

All in a moment the storm burst in its greatest fury.

The rain fell in torrents, and sharp flashes of lightning cut the air like blades. The roar was almost deafening. Dead limbs were falling all around them. Death stared them in the face. It was no time to recollect the shams of society. Ross's arms were around the girl; he held her close to his heart.

"Are you afraid?" he asked.

"Yes," she shivered. "Oh, it is so dreadful!"

"I'm thankful for one thing," he said, in a slow, distinct voice. "Whatever befalls us, we shall meet it together."

"It seems as if I had led you into this peril."

"No, you did not. It wouldn't matter if you had. I do not wish to live away from you—it would be misery."

"Hush!" she said, shaking like a leaf.

"Let me tell you how I love you, and then I am done."

"No, no. Don't say another word—I mustn't hear you—I will not! It would be wicked."

He looked down into her ghastly face, surprised at the vehemence with which the words were uttered. A quiver of pain came about his mouth.

"Have I misunderstood you, Madelaine? I thought—I hoped—"

"You don't understand me now," she interrupted. "Please say no more. I cannot blight your life as mine has been blighted."

"You will not be my wife?"

"Oh, Ross," she wailed, as if the words were wrenched from her very heart, "I am not fit."

"What do you mean?"

"Something stands between us—I thought you had guessed as much as that."

"What is it?"

A shiver went over her.

"Don't ask me. I can tell you no more."

The young man looked at her in silence for some time. A suspicion he did not like to entertain was throbbing at his heart.

"That man," he muttered, presently. "Of course I could not help seeing how closely he watched you. Madelaine, what is he to you?"

Her head dropped lower and lower. A sudden flame shot over her face, and then receded, to leave it paler than before.

"Forgive me, Ross. I cannot even tell you that."

For a long time afterwards neither spoke. By-and-bye the wind ceased to wrestle in the tree-tops, the thunder rolled away in the distance, and a patch of blue, like a signal of promise, broke through the black pall overhead.

"The storm is over," Ross said, in a dry, hard tone. "Now we can go home."

It was a silent walk. On the lawn at Hillcrest they met a group of drenched, miserable pleasure-seekers who had been caught in the storm like themselves. There was a chorus of exclamations, but nobody felt in a condition to ask questions.

Madelaine found her mother walking the floor in a half-distracted state of mind. But Mrs. Merle was a wise little mother. She took a single embrace, and then summoned her maid to prepare a warm bath and dry raiment for the shivering girl.

When all had been done that could be, and Madelaine lay on the sofa in her mother's room, she said, abruptly:

"I have seen him, mamma."

Mrs. Merle turned very pale, and dropped with a crash the bottle of cologne-water she held.

"Oh, my poor child!"

"He was at the picnic. He brought some oranges and nuts to sell as an excuse. Afterwards, he rowed Mr. Harcourt and me across the river."

"What did he say?"

"Nothing."

Mrs. Merle lifted her blanched face.

"I did not give him an opportunity to speak,

I could not. The mere sight of his face was enough."

"It must have been a terrible ordeal."

"It was."

Mrs. Merle walked to the window. Her agitation was greater than she cared to acknowledge.

No name had been mentioned, and yet she understood perfectly well of whom her daughter had been speaking.

The next day there was a good deal of talking and laughing over the mishaps of the excursion, for nobody seemed much the worse for the drenching they got. Of course Virginia Greyson brought up the subject of the handsome tramp—as she called the stranger—and Madelaine had to endure no little bantering. But she had schooled herself to meet it.

"I don't know which found most favour in the man's eyes, Miss Merle or the silver plate," Virginia said. "He seemed to divide his regards about equally."

"I do hope we won't be robbed and murdered in our beds," someone answered.

"I don't know. He looked equal to anything."

"Hush," said Mrs. Hallam, in her authoritative way. "You'll make Miss Greyson so nervous she will not sleep a wink to-night."

Early in the evening Ross Harcourt was walking on the lawn behind the house, when Virginia came quickly up to him.

"Follow me," she said, in a low voice. "Something is going to happen—I feel it in my bones."

She caught his hand and led him swiftly across one corner of the grounds toward the high-road. There was a little wicket in the hedge-row, under two larches.

They stood still a moment beside the gate, and Ross had opened his lips to question his companion, when she made a swift sign of caution.

"Hist," she whispered. "Watch and wait."

The next instant a girlish figure stole past in the hard, sandy road. Ross caught an indistinct glimpse of that dusky form, but it was enough.

"Madelaine!" he uttered.

"Yes, it is Miss Merle. The minute she left the house I suspected where she was going. We must follow her."

"No, no; that would be dishonourable."

"Call her back, then. She is bound for that old house by the river. It isn't safe for her to go there alone."

"No, it was decidedly unsafe. Ross had no expedients just then; he opened the gate, and passed through with Miss Greyson.

Madelaine walked rapidly, without once looking back. Consequently they had no difficulty in following her unperceived. They were close upon her when she entered the grounds belonging to the black old building and lost herself in the shadows brooding under the drooping trees.

"I'm afraid," Virginia cried, suddenly, clutching her companion's arm.

"Hush. We must go on, now. Which of these paths did Miss Merle take?"

"The one leading to the house, I think."

They struck into it, making all the haste possible. But Virginia really felt sick and frightened. She hung a dead weight on the young man's arm.

When they reached the old building itself, Madelaine still remained invisible. They could not tell whether she had entered the house or turned aside.

"You must not leave me," shivered Virginia, as Ross made an impatient movement. "I dare not remain alone."

It was of no use chafing. Miss Greyson was in no condition to be left. He seated himself on the broken steps, and drew her down beside him.

If anything happened so that Madelaine was compelled to scream for assistance, he hoped to hear her cry. He could not tell what it was he most feared and dreaded.

"What is the meaning of all this mystery?"

Virginia said, at length. "I wish you could tell me that."

"So do I."

"Is that man Madelaine's husband, do you think?"

Ross felt himself grow cold. It was a question he had never dared frame into words, but it had occurred to him more than once.

"I hope not—I pray not," he said.

"I can account for her conduct in no other way. Would she come to this lonely place to meet a man who was only her lover? It is my belief that she has made a mesalliance, and is ashamed to acknowledge it."

Ross made no reply. After a long interval of silence, a step sounded on the grass, and a dark figure rounded an angle of the building.

It was Madelaine herself. There still remained light enough in the sky for her to recognise them. She tried to speak, and then, as if her strength had suddenly gone, leaned heavily against the wall and groaned.

"Don't be frightened," said Ross, with ready tact. "It is only Miss Greyson and myself."

She tried to calm herself, and said:

"What are you doing here?"

"We saw you coming this way, and followed, that we might walk back with you."

"Is that all?" she responded, with a forced laugh. "It was very kind. Let us go at once."

There was a slight trembling in her sweet voice, but strength and courage seemed to return as suddenly as they had left her. Starting up, she glided quickly along the grass-grown path that led to the gate, silently ignoring the offered arm of Ross. Whether peril or heart-break had come to her in the gloomy silence of that black building by the river, none ever knew.

The rumour prevailed, the next morning, that Ross Harcourt had been called away unexpectedly on a matter of business. Madelaine heard it before leaving her own room. He had been gone two full hours, her informant said.

"He is afraid to trust himself here," the girl thought. "Well, it is better that he should go—better for us both."

And yet her heart was very sore. She could think of nothing all that long, interminable day but her trouble and the poor fellow who had tried to flee from his own misery and temptation. She missed him in more ways than one. It seemed as if a deeper darkness had gathered over her fate, though it had looked bleak and bare enough before.

The day was ended before she emerged from the seclusion of her chamber. The garden walks looked dark and cool in the purple dusk, and she stole forth unperceived.

The pansies that bordered the path seemed to look up at her with great, solemn, compassionate eyes, as though sympathising with her heart-sickness.

"It is his favourite flower," she said to herself, and gathering a few dewy blossoms, held them to her lips.

At that moment a step sounded on the gravel, and Ross stood at her side. She put out her hands in welcome—the impulse was too strong to be resisted. But her face was scarlet.

"I thought you had gone," she said.

"I did go," he answered, looking fixedly at her. "But you have brought me back again."

"I?"

"That is what I said. I had not counted the cost of flight. I have been cowardly enough to give up, and return."

"I am very sorry," she said, with a sigh, her head drooping.

He came nearer, and said, in a voice not altogether clear at first:

"As the train bore me away this morning my heart kept calling for you. And by-and-bye the thought came that my love might not be so hopeless as I had imagined. That is what turned me back. Don't keep me in suspense, Madelaine. If you can explain what now looks so dark and mysterious, pray do so at once."

"Explain?" she echoed, a little sharply. "It would be of no use—none. It is too late for that."

—too late for anything but the taking up of new burdens."

"Mine are grievous enough already."
"I know it. I'm sorry for you. I can say no more."

He turned away with a sort of groan, but was back again in a moment.

"Madeline," he said, tremulously, "we belong to each other. I feel—I know it. My love, my one sweet love, I will believe anything you may tell me. I will trust you implicitly. Only don't send me away."

"No, I will not send you, because you must go of your own free will."

"Never! Nothing but crime and shame shall part us again."

A pallid look of anguish crossed her face.

"You have said it," she faintly whispered. "Crime and shame do stand between us. Let that suffice."

She broke from him suddenly, and hurried back to the house. He might have followed and overtaken her, but did not. Her words confirmed all his worst fears.

The faint flicker of hope that had been kindled in his breast died utterly away. He felt like one whose sun has gone down for ever.

In the "wee, sma' hours" of that night a sudden tumult arose. First there was a pistol shot that awakened everybody in the house, and this was succeeded by screams and cries that might have aroused even the seven sleepers.

In a moment, as it seemed, all was confusion; doors were opened and shut, and Mrs. Hallam's guests, a very startled looking company indeed, gathered in the lower hall.

Thomas, the hired man, stood there, white in the face, holding the discharged pistol in his hand.

"Murder! fire! thieves!" he was screaming at the top of his voice.

Ross was among the first to reach the spot. "What's the matter, man?" he sternly demanded. "Stop your shrieking, and tell us at once."

"The poor fellow could only point to an open window at his back, and gasp brokenly:

"Out there—thief—silver plate! I heard him—almost gone—put a bullet through his ugly carcass."

Sure enough, on the veranda, underneath the window, lay the lifeless body of a man. A quantity of silver-ware and jewellery was scattered around, just where it had fallen when looted from the death-grip of the burglar.

A light was brought, and Ross held it close to the dead man's face. After that first glance he staggered back, white and breathless. Madeline stood just behind him, clinging to Mrs. Hallam's arm. In a moment he had rallied, and drawn her to one side.

"Come away," he said. "This is no place for you."

A long, shivering sigh was her only answer. She stood staring straightforward, a look of horror in her eyes.

"Let me take you to your room," he urged. She tried to speak; after a long interval her pale lips parted, a few whispered words falling from them.

"I have seen him. I can bear it. Do not think of me. But mamma must never know."

At that very moment Mrs. Merle appeared. Ross stepped forward, before the ghastly corpse had come within the range of her vision, and drew her forcibly into the hall.

"Go back," he said, peremptorily. "The danger is over now. You will only be in the way."

"What's all this confusion about?" whispered the poor woman.

"Thomas has shot a man who was running away with Mrs. Hallam's plate. That's all."

"Oh, how dreadful!"

She seemed frightened and distressed, but suffered Ross to take her back to her chamber. When he returned Madeline stood alone at the foot of the stairs, waiting for him.

"Of course you must be told everything now," she said, quite calmly. "You recognised that man?"

"It is the same who rowed us over the river."

"Yes. He is, or rather was, my father."

"Your father!" cried Ross, in a startled voice. "No, no. It can't be true. Your father?"

"Even so. I can't tell our shameful story in detail. We have tried over and over again to reclaim him. In vain. Nothing ever seemed to move him. He refused to give up his vagabond ways notwithstanding our pleadings. Something in the wild, lawless life he led kept a stronger hold on his fancy than wife or child were able to gain. But the end is here. Mamma and I have suffered much."

Her voice died away in a sob. Ross, still half incredulous, suddenly stretched forth his arms and drew her into them.

"And so, my poor child, this is the secret you have been hiding from me? How strange it all seems! I thought—"

"What did you think?" she asked, looking up as he hesitated.

"It does not matter, since I was mistaken. If your father's errors are all that keeps us apart, much happiness is yet in store for us. Heaven bless you, my darling."

Adolphe Merle was buried, and no one knew what name he had borne in life. While Mrs. Merle was taking her afternoon nap, the next day, they laid her erring husband in the grave. Madeline came, leaning on Ross Harcourt's arm, and strewed the plain coffin with flowers. It was all she could do for the father who, living, had been a blight to her young life rather than a blessing.

Of course Ross persisted in his wooing until he won her. The real facts of that romance at Hillcrest never came to light, though Virginia Greyson did her best to solve the mystery, and learn what tie had really linked Madeline Merle to the handsome tramp.

Months afterwards Madeline broke gradually to her mother the fact of Adolphe's death. But how or where he died Mrs. Merle will never know.

R. W.

FACETIÆ.

WEIGHTED.

CLERK (giving change): "Have you a penny, sir?"

SWELL: "Haw! 'Don't genewally cawwy coppers!"

CLERK: "Then I'm afraid I must give you eleven of 'em, sir!"

—Punch.

THE Right Sort of Residence for an Habitual Blunderer—A bungle-low. —Funny Folks.

"NOTICES OF MOTION."

TEAM-CAR and Bicycle Bells. —Punch.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

It is announced, as an instance of the badness of the times, that far more second-hand carriages are for sale in London at this moment than ever was the case before—so many persons who used to keep their own vehicles having become unable to afford that luxury. But this state of affairs would rather seem to point to social improvement than anything else, for it shows that people are getting on their legs again.

—Judy.

CHARITABLE NOTES.

A BETTER field for English charity than the battle-field of Turkey is the Sheffield of England.

Leave those who murder abroad, and look after the Merthyr at home.

Never mind about the worsted Turks; give an eye to the English wool—Woolverhampton.

The famished Injuns being satisfied, help the famished Injuneers. —Fun.

FIGHTING COSTUME.

TREMBLE, Russia! and you, oh, Czar, begin to make your peace with the world!

The Jersey Militia is being reorganised "in accordance with instructions from the War Office."

The authorities must evidently mean business when they begin to bethink themselves of their Jersey. —Fun.

TOO SHOCKING.

(Scene: The Last Cabinet Council before the Seventeenth.)

BEACONSFIELD: "Well, I shall maintain that India is in danger."

SALISBURY: "Well, if you will, we shan't India."

NORTHGOTE: "Oh, lor! oh, lor! Salisbury, don't. We shan't hinde' ye—do ye see, Beaky?"

BEACONSFIELD: "What kids you fellows are! Why can't you be serious?—like me!"

Winks—oh! such a wink. —Fun.

MEM.

THE earliest solution of the present question of war or peace will probably be a dis-solution. —Fun.

OUT.

"WHENEVER you are out of anything let me know," said a gentleman to a poor Chinaman he had been helping.

A few days later the Chinaman sent him a message:

"I am outsee of townnee."

AFTER A STORM, ETC.

A MAN writes to say that Mrs. Jones threw a teacup at Jones.

He retaliated with a saucer. She responded with the slop-basin, that went out through the window.

Jones then went out himself. He returned in two hours, smiling.

He put his arm around her neck, and said: "Are you better, now?"

She replied, sarcastically: "I never was worse!"

Jones thought so, too. She meant she never was better.

Our correspondent adds that he is glad he is not Jones. —Judy.

CON.

WHAT eminent divine would have made a good chiropodist?—Dr. Warts. —Fun.

TRUE LOVE AGAIN.

MRS. STODGER: "How be your wife a-gettin' on, Mr. Henpeckin?"

MR. H.: "I be most mortal glad, Mrs. Stodger, to say she's a-recoverin' very slowly!"

—Fun.

A WEIGHTY MATTER.

PLACID DAUGHTER: "Our stay at uncle's has been delightful, pa. Ma has lost just fifteen pounds!"

LEATH PA: "Fifteen pounds! How wrong. She knows we cannot afford to lose anything."

P. D.: "I mean fifteen pounds in weight, pa, and it was all her own, so it won't come off you." —Fun.

A POWERFUL MAN.

"AH, sir," exclaimed a Scotch elder, in a tone of pathetic recollection, "our late minister was the man. He was a powerful preacher, for the short time he delivered the Word among us he knocked three pulpits to pieces, and dang the insides out o' five Bibles."

HIS NAME.

"WHAT is the use of that man painting his name twice on his sign?" said a gentleman to his friend, as he pointed to a sign which read: "J. E. Weller, Jeweller."

A YOUNG man visiting his sweetheart met a rival who was somewhat advanced in years, and wishing to rally him, inquired how old he was.

"I can't exactly tell," replied the other, "but I can inform you that an idiot is older at twenty than a man at sixty."

PHLIETATION.

"PHAIREST Phlora," billed the amorous youth, "phor ever dismiss your phears, and phly with one whose phervent phancy is phixed on you alone. Phriends—phamily—phather—phorget

them, and think only of the phelicity of the phuture! Phew phellows are so phastidious as your Pherdinand, so phaign not phondness if you phool it not. Phorego phrolic, and answer phinally, Phlora!"

"Oh, Pherdinand, you phool!" she cooed.

—Funny Folks.

SETTLING IT.

TAX COLLECTOR: "Now, look here; how many more times do you want me to call?"

DEFAULTER: "Not ever again, sir, if it's the same to you."

HE COULD FILL THE PLACE.

A FATHER stood, with his little son, watching the progress of a new building.

"Pa," said the latter, as both attentively watched the foreman, "I should think you could fill that man's place; all he does is to sit there and swear at the workmen."

The father turned from the contemplation of the scene with a suddenness that nearly sent the breath out of the body of his too-observant son.

OVERDONE.

OLD LADY: "And may I ask why you are leaving your present place?"

APPLICANT (with indignation): "Well, mem, Mrs. Ferret would come into my kitchen, which is a liberty as no respectable person could put up with."

LADY: "Indeed! Then as I go into my kitchen whenever I choose we need not say any more. You will suit me." —Fun.

A FIRESIDE STORY.

SHE sat by the fire knitting.

Her lovely eyes rested ever and anon upon the handsome face of her lover opposite.

"When are we going to be knitted together?" he asked her, softly.

She knitted her brows.

"Don't, George. You made me drop a stitch. Look at the wool!"

"Wool you be mine, darling," he answered, still more softly.

She fetched him a playful one in the eye with the apparatus.

He got the needle, and went away and married another girl who didn't do fancy work.

—Fun.

SHE WANTED A BOW.

A VERY handsome woman entered a shop and asked for a bow.

The polite clerk threw himself back and remarked:

"I am at your service."

"Yes, but I want a buff, not a green one," was the reply.

The young man went on measuring goods immediately.

The patron of merchants and bankers is St. Ledger.

—Funny Folks.

A LAWYER who is "struck off" the Rolls must turn elsewhere for his bread. —Funny Folks.

HOW TO ASCERTAIN.

A DOMESTICATED correspondent wants to know how much starch it would take to make a stiff breeze.

"Judy?" advises the inquirer to consult a solicitor—a sea lawyer, if possible. —Judy.

SOMEONE'S Last, and Evidently his Worst—Why is the Emperor of Russia like the London Crystal Palace?—Because he is a Base Czar (bazaar). —Judy.

THE Manchester (Peace-at-any-Price) Policy—Cotton to Everybody. —Judy.

STATISTICS.

HAY AND GRAIN IN AMERICA.—Some conception of the magnitude of the harvests of hay and grain in America may be formed, when it is considered that there are 25,282,797 acres in grass for hay, yielding an annual crop of 30,867,100 tons, valued at 300,901,252 dols.; 27,627,021 acres in wheat, producing nearly

300,000,000 bushels, of a value of 325,000,000 dols.; 13,358,908 acres in oats, with a yield of 320,884,000 bushels, worth 112,865,900 dols.; 1,766,511 acres in barley, yielding 27,310,500 bushels, of a market value of 25,735,110 dols.; and 1,468,374 acres in rye, giving a return of 20,374,800 bushels, of a selling value of 13,635,826 dols. These five crops alone yield a harvest of the total value of nearly 800,000,000 dols.

AT THE MID-WATCH.

LAST night, in the hush of my silent room,

Alone and lonely, I sat and wrought
In the checkered web of an airy loom,
Plying the mystical shuttle—Thought:
Over and under, and thro' and thro'
The thread was drawn, and the long
web grew.

I heard the drip of the rainy eaves,
And far, by wintry hollow and height,
The low lament of the wind that grieves
In the dead, black waste of the
middle-night,
And the sound of the wind, and the
rain on the roof,
Were woven into my magic woof.

Wearily, wearily, thread by thread,
I fashioned into my stint of rhyme
The ghostly colours of dreams long
dead,

The tarnished gold of my morning-
time
The hopes that faded with evening's
glow,
And the love that was ashes long ago.

Strange shadows rustled along the floor—
The old clock, ticking against the wall,
Measured the moments, and evermore,
Like the beads of a friar, I heard
them fall.

Into the silence, one by one,
With a silvery clink, till the year was
done;

Till the deep-mouthed bell, with a
brazen boom,
Rang out from the turret of old St.
John's—

A solemn glory transfused the gloom,
Like the ghostly glimmer of vanished
dawns,
And I knew that the sweet year,
fleeing far,
Had left the heavenly gates ajar!

Left me, alone with my ceaseless pain—
My cross unlifted, my crown unwon—
With the worthless web I have
wrought in vain

In wintry shadow and summer sun,
Useless reminings and idle tears—
The Dead Sea fruit of the wasted years!

GEMS.

THERE'S a turned-down page, as some
writer says,

In every human life;
A hidden store of happier days,
Of peace amid the strife.

A folded leaf that the world knows
not—

A love dream rudely crushed;
The sight of a face that is not for-
got.

Although the voice be hushed,
The far distant sounds of a harp's soft
strings,

An echo on the air;
The hidden page may be full of such
things,
Of things that once were fair.

If there is a man who can eat his bread at peace with man, it is that man who has brought that bread out of the earth by his own honest industry. It is cankered by no fraud—it is wet by no tear—it is stained by no blood.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SOFT GINGERBREAD.—Three cups of sugar, one of molasses, one of butter, one of sour milk, four eggs, one teaspoonful of soda dissolved in a little vinegar, one tablespoonful of ginger, one of cinnamon, five cups of flour.

CANARY BIRDS.—To keep insects off of birds, put the least bit of kerosene oil under each wing—say as much as remains on your little finger after you have let the drop fall off. Do this every ten days until all are removed. Clean the cage well every day; scour it in hot water; use borax and but little soap. Mate the birds during the last of February or first of March.

FROSTED LEMON PIE.—Take the yolks of three eggs, one cup of sugar, the grated rind and juice of one lemon, two spoonfuls of corn-starch, a small piece of butter, and one cup of sweet milk; bake; then on the top spread the whites of three eggs beaten to a stiff froth, with three spoonfuls of sugar; put back in the oven and brown one minute.

SPANISH CREAM.—Take one-half a box of gelatine and soak it over night in a pint of cold water; in the morning take a quart of fresh milk, place over the fire in a farina boiler, and when scalding hot (not boiling) dissolve the gelatine in it, then add the yolks of three well-beaten eggs, into which has been stirred a cupful of white sugar, beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, put them into a glass dish, pour the hot custard upon them; when cool, add one gill of sherry wine, stand in a cool place.

FRENCH PUDDING SAUCE.—Into a small saucepan put one whole egg and two yolks, with half a cup of loaf sugar. Beat them well and set over the fire (in a larger pan of boiling water is best). Pour in half a cup of sherry very gradually, stirring very briskly all the while. When somewhat thickened remove from the fire and add the juice of a small lemon.

MISCELLANEOUS.

DEATH OF MR. JOSEPH BONOMI.—The death is announced of Mr. Joseph Bonomi, the well-known Egyptologist, and curator of Sir John Soane's Museum, at his residence, The Camels, Wimbledon Park, in his 82nd year. The deceased was the son of the late Joseph Bonomi, architect to St. Peter's, Rome, and friend of Sir J. Reynolds.

DEATH OF THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.—The well-known hippopotamus at the Zoological Gardens is dead. He was caught, while quite a baby, in 1849, on the island of Obayseh on the White Nile, and created an immense public excitement on his arrival at the "Zoo" in 1850, when the number of visitors rose from 168,895 in the preceding year to 360,402. Down to the time of his death he continued to be a prime favourite with the public, the arrival of his more juvenile mate "Adhela," in 1853, having in no degree lessened his attractiveness.

A QUESTION OF TITLE.—A case involving the title to a considerable property in the neighbourhood of Birmingham was tried before Lord Coleridge on Monday, in which the plaintiff, one Jennens, set up the contention that the last Earl Howe but one, who was created an earl in 1821, was not the son of his supposed parents, but was the child of the coachman's wife. Lord Coleridge said the speech of the learned counsel for the plaintiff did not indicate sufficient evidence to invalidate seventy-three years' undisputed possession, which was as good a title as most people had. The verdict was, therefore, for the present holders of the property.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A CONSTANT READER.—Your brother could not be bound by an agreement signed by him before he became of age unless subsequently ratified by any payment under its provisions; but you, as the eldest son, can recover the value of the tools, &c., by first taking out letters of administration. The court, however, might be more than the object sought would be worth.

JULIA.—A married woman is in law deemed incapable of making a will, except under special circumstances whereby she derives property which is her own absolutely independent of her husband. The operation of the protection order would cease at your death.

SAM T.—Chlorodyne taken cautiously in small doses, as prescribed in directions attached to each bottle, occasionally but not constantly might do good, but you must not think of using chloroform without the advice and assistance of a medical man.

ROBERTO MARO.—No charge is made.

J. P.—There is nothing to pay for insertion.

DAISY.—The tale inquired for is not published in volume form.

LIO.—1. There is an outline History of England in Gleig's series. Macaulay's History is grand but unfinished. Lingard's is strongly tinged with Roman Catholic views, and Hume and Smollett's is exhaustive. We cannot decide which is the best for you—for there are many others—unless you tell us more particularly what you want. **2.** Allen and Cornwell's Grammar is a good one suitable more especially for schools. Dr. Latham's and that of Professor Morris, amongst others, for advanced students. **3.** Inquire for particulars at some shipping office.

POOR OLD CARBIDIFF.—Lozenges are compounds of gum and sugar with flavouring or colouring matter added according to description required. The sugar should be pulverised but not necessarily heated—gum arabic or tragacanth, strained white of egg or decoction of Irish moss being used to make the constituent materials adhere. They dissolve quickly or slowly according to the small or large proportion of gum employed. Colouring matter is composed of, amongst other things, sulphate of indigo and chalk, burnt sugar or spirit, spinach or parsley leaves (digested in spirit), powdered cochineal, extract of logwood, saffron and turmeric. Plaster of Paris is sometimes improperly used but is easily detected.

S. F. H.—1. Search the Directory and make your own selection. **2.** Polishing of marble is effected by first rubbing the surface with freestone, after which it is wrought upon with pumice-stone, and, lastly, with the finest emery-powder, from which the glossy surface is obtained. **3.** We know of no work upon the subject.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. A strong dose of calomel overnight, followed by a smart purgative next morning, is recommended for thread worms. Turpentine is also an active anthelmintic, very effective when taken in sufficient doses. It would be wise, however, to consult a medical man, as the remedies usually applied depend upon the nature of the complaint and they should be judiciously combined with suitable diet and if necessary tonic medicines. **2.** There is a book on Poultry published by Cassell.

F. W. P.—See answer to "Leo."

TWELVE YEARS' SUBSCRIBER.—The story was completed in due course.

W. H. G.—Hair removed by fevers and other sickness is made to grow by washing the scalp with a strong decoction of sage leaves once or twice a day.

EMILY N.—Stings and bites are often instantaneously cured by washing them in hartshorn or turpentine.

B. H.—The materials required to imitate forest leaves are red, green, brown, and yellow sealing-wax; muslin leaves of different forms—the leaves must be wired—and fitch brushes. Dissolve the sealing-wax in different bottles, and apply the wax to the leaves with a brush; they may be variegated by dipping the brush in the different bottles of wax. These leaves are pretty for ornamenting baskets; they are also pretty when mixed with dried grasses.

BRIGHTON.—By regular and temperate living with fresh air and gymnastic exercise you may succeed in developing your proportions satisfactorily; but you must not expect to grow tall by such means. We cannot tell you how to add to your stature that which Nature withhold.

MARIE.—Oxalic acid and hot water will remove iron-mould, as also will the common sorrel bruised in a mortar and rubbed on the spots.

ARMOURER BENCH, SEWING MACHINE JACK, JOE ROPE MAKER, and STEEL BAR DRIVER, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Armourer Bench is twenty-five, tall, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children. Sewing Machine Jack is twenty-one, medium height, black hair, hazel eyes, good-looking. Joe Rope Maker is twenty-three, medium height, dark, black hair, blue eyes. Steel Bar Driver is twenty-eight, medium height, dark, brown hair, black eyes. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-five, of loving dispositions.

K. L. and G. K., two friends, wish to correspond with two ladies. K. L. is twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children, good-looking. G. K. is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fair.

MILLY, twenty, brown eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-one.

E. G. and V. L., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. E. G. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. V. L. is twenty, dark hair, medium height, fond of home, tall.

POLLIE and EMILY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Pollie is twenty, medium height, fair, light brown hair, blue eyes, loving, fond of home. Emily is twenty-one, fair, dark brown hair, blue eyes, tall, fond of home and children, good-looking. Respondents must be fond of home, of loving dispositions, tall, dark.

EDITH and ETHEL, two friends, wish to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Edith is eighteen, dark brown hair and blue eyes. Ethel is eighteen, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-five.

A WAT-SIDE MEMORY.

Under the silver fringes
Of the willow-boughs that swung
A-glitter in the sunshine,
With frozen jewels strung,
With the smouldering fire of opals,
Of pearl and chrysoprase,
And the twinkling diamond drops that set
The frosty morn ablaze:

Under the swaying willows,
Where the tall-green rushes sprang,
The wayside spring of my childhood
Bubbled and laughed and sang—
Bubbled and rippled over,
As the blithe winds came and went,
And dimpled all day in the sunshine
With a gurgle of glad content!

Through a chink in a mossy boulder
Its living waters purled,
With inarticulate whispers
Of the wonderful under-world;
The tall ferns nodded wisely
With every frond and feather—
The brown reeds bent to listen,
With all their heads together!

Under the wintry star-light,
And under the summer noon,
Its ceaseless silvery babble
Was set to the self-same tune;
The rushes on its margin
Were the greenest that ever grew—
And moss and brake, for its sweet sake,
Were golden through and through.

When the skies were grey with tempest,
And the landscape bleak and bare,
It seemed like a joyous presence
In the midst of grief and care:
Like a cheery, happy nature
No cloud can overcast,
In joy or pain, in sun or rain,
Contented to the last.

E. A. B.

EDWARD R., thirty, tall, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age residing in or near London.

AUT, twenty-one, of a loving disposition, brown hair, wishes to correspond with a gentleman about twenty-four. She is thoroughly domesticated, and fond of home and music.

HAPPY JACK and HAPPY JACK'S CHUM, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Happy Jack is twenty-four, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of children. Happy Jack's Chum is twenty-five, tall, fair, light curly hair, dark blue eyes.

MILLY and VIOLET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Milly is eighteen, tall, hazel eyes, good-looking. Violet is seventeen, tall, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of music, and is a good singer.

NELLIE and LOTTIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Nellie is twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, medium height. Lottie is nineteen, dark hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home.

A. F. R., nineteen, of a loving disposition, tall, dark hair, would like to correspond with a young gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be about twenty, brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and children.

FORE ROYAL YARD, SHEET-ANCHOR BOB, and HELMSMAN, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies with a view to matrimony. Fore Royal Yard is twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes, fond of home. Sheet-Anchor Bob is short, dark, and fond of children. Helmsman is fair, loving, fond of music. Bob Buntin is nineteen, tall, dark, light hair, and good-tempered. Respondents must be fond of home.

R. N. O., twenty-one, loving, light hair, blue eyes, tall would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty-two, fond of home.

LOTTIE and LIZZIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Lottie is nineteen, fair, blue eyes, medium height. Lizzie is eighteen, blue eyes, medium height, fair.

SUSAN, eighteen, tall, fair, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony.

G. C. and F. E., two friends, would like to correspond with two ladies. G. C. is twenty-two, tall, hazel eyes, fond of home. F. E. is twenty-four, medium height, dark eyes, good-looking.

D. M. and P. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. D. M. is seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing, tall. P. F. is seventeen, dark blue eyes, medium height, fond of home, considered good-looking.

J. T. F., a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, dark, medium height, wishes to correspond with a young lady fond of home and music.

ADA, MABEL, and MAUD, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Ada is nineteen, golden hair, brown eyes. Mabel is twenty-one, tall, dark, handsome. Maud is twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be between twenty-one and twenty-five.

NELL, eighteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, tall, and good-looking.

ROSE and GERTY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Rose is twenty, thoroughly domesticated, fair. Gerty is eighteen, dark, fond of home and children.

S. W. D., twenty-two, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a lady with a view to matrimony. Respondents must be of a loving disposition, fond of music.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

T. L. W. is responded to by—A Yorkshire Girl, twenty-three, fair, blue eyes, light hair, medium height, fond of home and dancing.

A. C. by—Ethel T.

GEORGE by—Rupertia, loving.

BLANCHE by—G. T., handsome.

GERTUDE by—G. K., fair, good-looking.

LILIAN by—Henry, fair, blue eyes, medium height, and good-looking.

SAM by—Lizzie, twenty-five, medium height, of a loving disposition.

ROBERT by—Emma, twenty-one, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children.

LOTTIE by—James N. K.

EVERIL by—Leone, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes.

CLARA by—Sylvio, dark hair, brown eyes, fond of home and children.

X. Y. Z. by—Nina, medium height, dark hair, fond of home and dancing.

L. D. M. by—Ethel L., of a loving disposition, fond of home.

JAMES K., by—Alice Maud G., eighteen, good-looking, fond of home, loving.

AMATUS by—Gerda, fair, medium height, and fond of home.

MAGGIE by—John.

LIZZIE by—Will.

D. H. by—Nellie, nineteen, fair, blue eyes, thoroughly domesticated, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

ADELINA by—Fred J. S., twenty-eight, fair, blue eyes, fond of music.

LEOPOLD by—Lacy, eighteen, dark, and fond of dancing.

T. L. W. by—Emily, medium height, fair, very fond of home.

NELLIE by—Thomas S., dark brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music.

HETTIE by—G. P. H., twenty, medium height, light hair, blue eyes.

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